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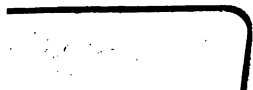
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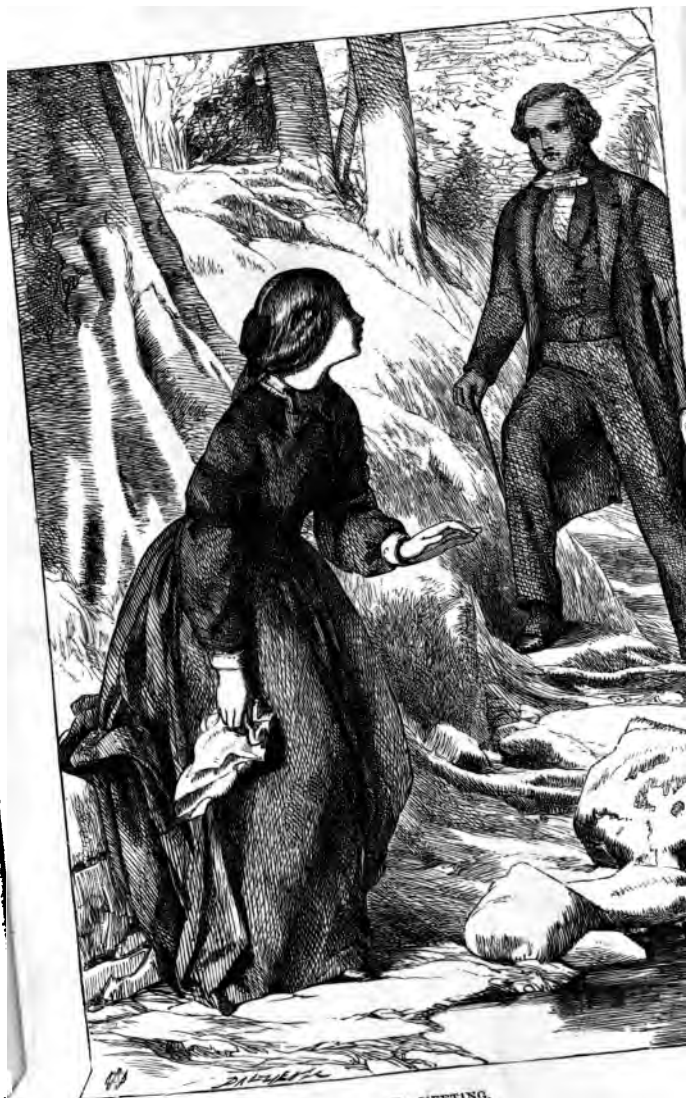




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THE MEETING.



BY DAYLIGHT;

OR,

PICTURES FROM REAL LIFE.

A Translation from the German of

OTILIE WILDERMUTH.

EDITED BY

ANNE PRATT,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAUNTS OF THE WILD FLOWERS."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:

ROUTLEDGE, WARNE, AND ROUTLEDGE,

BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL.

NEW YORK: 129, GRAND STREET.

1865.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

OTILIE WILDERMUTH, who is here introduced to the English reader, is one of the most popular authors in Germany. Her tales, whether intended for the perusal of older persons or for children, have won much regard for her in her Fatherland, more especially in the circle of the German female world. Some slight account of our author may, therefore, prove interesting to our readers.

Otilie Wildermuth was born in 1817. Her father, Herr Ronschütz, was a law councillor of Rottenburg-on-the-Neckar, a small town of Würtemberg. In 1819, however, the family removed to Marbach, Schiller's pleasant birthplace; and Otilie resided here with her parents and brothers in her happy home until her marriage in 1843 with Dr. Wildermuth, Professor of Mathematics in the Gymnasium at Tübingen.

It was not till after her marriage that Otilie commenced those tales which are now so much read, and of which one of her countrymen said



recently, "Ottolie Wildermuth knows the heart of woman as no other writer knows it, and she describes it simply and beautifully."* Her "Pictures of Swabian Life," her earliest work, was followed by "Auguste," the "Letters of Girlhood," "Tales of the Castle and Cottage," and various other small volumes; and it is hoped that the simple pictures of real life here presented in our own language may find favour with English as they have done with German readers.

ANNE PRATT.

* "Die Gartenlande."

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I HAVE included under the general title, "By Daylight," a number of stories written at different periods. I need scarcely explain what I mean by this name. Mine are no cloud-pictures, no misty, floating figures, which leave one to guess only what they are and what they mean; no moonlight fancies flooding the world with magic witchery; no night-sketches, painting the dark, gloomy, horrible phases of life and society. They are simple pictures, showing life and men in that clear daylight which, while it destroys so many dreams and illusions, yet dispels also many groundless alarms and terrors. That which by moonlight glittered as a precious gem is often discovered by daylight to be but a piece of coloured glass; while, on the other hand, that which amid the darkness seemed to be the arm of a robber shows itself in the light of morning to be but a harmless bough. If the daylight gives pain to the eyes yet red with weeping, so also it dries the tears, and reveals the

many bright and good things yet remaining in the lot of the weeper. Daylight does not entice to slumber and to dream, but it calls us to earnest work. How far I have succeeded in developing these ideas I must leave to the friendly judgment of my readers.

I have only to add that in this little book, written by a woman about women, under the varied aspects of domestic life, the portraitures and scenes represented in the sketches which it comprises must not be regarded as merely ideal; on the contrary, whether exhibited in a humorous point of view, or occasionally displaying eccentricity, they are in every instance characteristic of individuals in actual life.

OTILIE WILDERMUTH.

TÜBINGEN, *Summer*, 1861.

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Front.

THE MEETING.

REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the project's progress and results.

2. The project has been completed successfully.

3. The results are as follows:

4.

5.

6.



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and who received much advice how to bring her up carefully and judiciously. The aunt replied to all these hints and instructions with a dry "Yes," and took off little Lena and her small trunk.

Lena's lot might possibly have been worse than with the Bailiff's wife, and this she thankfully declared to the day of her death. Pure country air she had in plenty, and as much food as she could eat. But you must please not to inquire too particularly into the dishes. The aunt knew nothing of the arts of a good kitchen, nor did she prize them. If her table was but supplied with large joints of meat, and good thick puddings, and soup with dark fat floating on its surface, the dinner seemed to her an excellent one. Lena often remarked in later years, at times when she had but little food, that she owed two things to her aunt's housekeeping. "The first was," said she, "that I found out that even the humblest food was really good enough if only cooked a little more carefully; and secondly, even at times when I have felt really hungry, I had but to call to mind the large fat pieces of meat and the greasy soup which I had at my aunt's, and I felt satisfied."

As to going to school, this the aunt thought quite an unnecessary part of our poor child's training. "If she can repeat her catechism," she would say, "and can write well enough to keep the house-keeping book, she knows quite as much as is needful;" and thus it happened that the school list of attendance showed a great many marks of

absence against Lena's name on account of various employments at home, so that she never made any great show at the yearly examination. But, however poorly she went through this, she had such kind and gentle eyes, and when the teacher would say with some impatience, "Well, Lena, what more?" she looked at him with so much simplicity, and said so gravely, "If I only knew it I should be so glad to tell you," that the master felt compelled to laugh instead of punishing her. She was the good genius of all her schoolfellows. To some who were poor she would give her luncheon; for others she washed ink spots out of their frocks. She hunted for lost balls during play-hours, or fetched forgotten books, so her companions helped her in the deficiencies of her attainments in learning, which were sadly remarkable, even amid the humble pretensions of the village school.

When at home Lena really had not a minute for preparing her school lessons, for her aunt merited the praise of her country by enriching it annually with a new inhabitant. This event was looked on as a part of the ordinary course of the year, and the neighbours thought all was right when they saw each year one more little creature creeping around Lena, and when in spring, as soon as the first daisies peeped forth, Lena led them all away to the large green behind the house where she went to tend the young ducks and geese, in company with the hopeful little scions of

the farm. It was not very easy for her to superintend at the same time all the members of her numerous flock, or to protect the little boys who were running about from the mother goose which was always eager for combat, and went skimming over the green with full-spread wings. Besides this, she had to look well after the older children, lest they should fall into the duck-pond, and to keep an eye on the two youngest in their small wicker-work carriage, for these little things would scream each in a different key, and awake each other, and claw each other's faces with their little chubby hands. "That was an earnest of my future life," she often said in later days, laughing heartily; "a precious school indeed! Nothing, I used to think afterwards, could be quite so bad as that." The aunt, however, fed her sufficiently, and gave her large lumps of black bread to eat, during these pastoral walks, and some sweet wine of evenings; but she expected that whilst she took charge of the children, she should also knit blue worsted stockings, which were worn out in no small number.

"Now, that really was a hard task," she would say, "but, 'Necessity is the mother of invention,' and I made many ingenious contrivances to accomplish it. I soon saw that the old goose could look well after her children without any help of mine, and our neighbour Frederick, whose trowsers I had once mended, fenced in a place for the goose, where she might threaten us with her wings as much as she liked. So I sang and whistled to my little

charge while I knitted, or I pushed the little carriage to and fro with my foot. Now and then, too, I let them cry a little, remembering what their mother said sometimes to them, 'Cry away ; never mind, while you are crying I know that you are living.'

"I found out several amusements for the elder children, and one of these was regarded with especial favour. I collected at my leisure all the old pieces of paper which I could find, and with my needle and thread fastened them together so as to make an exceedingly long train. This I fixed to the plaits of my hair, and then every one was allowed to snatch off a little piece, till all were gone. I took good care to impress upon them that I never could make another train unless they picked up every little scrap of paper, and I cannot tell you how much this paper train helped me through my work. As often as my aunt said, 'Now Lena, go out with my little folks,' the boys would ask, 'Are we going to have the paper train, Lena? May we have the paper train?' And then it made a grand holiday for them. Those were my happiest days, however, when I could take my little flock out of doors. On rainy and winter days it was sometimes very wearisome in our parlour, and when the noise became very great nobody was safe from one of my aunt's blows. I had many an undeserved box on the ear, and when my aunt afterwards was sorry for it, she would say, 'If she did not deserve this blow to-day, she is sure to deserve it on some other, and so it may pay for to-morrow's faults.'"

"Patience I certainly learned in this school of life," Lena would say, "and many another lesson besides, but it would have been a sad thing had I never been removed into any other, for there was not too much order here, and good management would never have been learned at this house. If we were in want of a handkerchief we often took the towel instead; and our fruit was kept in an old coverlid, which was very seldom washed. When the apples rotted in great numbers, or the vegetables decayed in the cellar, my aunt never vexed herself about it.

" 'They may be thrown on the manure-heap,' she would say, 'and so they will all be good for the precious field.' Or she would remark, 'Well, the pig must be treated to something nice, he belongs to the family as much as I do.' "

But Lena remained cheerful and merry amidst it all. In addition to her contented spirit she had the gift of a musical voice, which helped her and the children to while away many a tedious hour. The choruses of the family were often very amusing. When Lena vainly endeavoured to keep their voices in tune, the little creatures would sing out with her, thinking the louder they could sing the better. The aunt regarded Lena's cheerfulness as her especial merit; and when the servants of the house, with that contempt for a poor relation of the family which is but too common, would say, "Well, she is singing again, I should like to know *what* she can have to sing and whistle about, she

who has not a thing to call her own," the aunt would reply with self-complacency, "Do not begrudge her her merriment; she has good reason to sing, because, poor orphan as she is, she is under a good roof, and has good food in plenty."

Lena was a standing proof of her aunt's benevolence, and hence her aunt liked Lena very much, for people do not readily forgive the thought that others are not glad to live with them.

As the duties of little Lena, even when she became great Lena, were of so prosaic a kind, she could not always choose songs very appropriate to them, and she was often laughed at, because once when she was hanging up a ham to smoke, she had been heard singing,

"Thou, thou, whom I love so dearly."

And another time, when stuffing a goose, had sung,

"We are sitting so happy together,
We love each other so well."

But she bore the laugh good-humouredly, and said, "Oh well, a goose is one of God's creatures; who knows that I might not lighten its woes by singing?"

But Lena was not destined to dwell for ever among the flesh-pots of the Bailiff's wife. Her uncle the Councillor of Commerce had lost his beloved consort, a calamity which would not surprise any one, as he had twenty years ago married a widow fifty-six years of age, so that he had good reason to *expect that he might be in this grievous*

condition. His old housekeeper could not endure a second person in the house to share her duties, though it was evident that there ought to be somebody else there, in case of need, lest the household chest and goods should be left too much exposed to danger. It occurred to him therefore, as a happy idea, that his orphan niece might come to live with them. He hinted this plan of his to the housekeeper, Catherine, as gently as possible, and described the child, whom he had not seen for a long time, as a slim little thing, in order the more readily to obtain her acquiescence.

"Ah, indeed! Well then, what can such a poor little creature do?" cried Catherine. "How can she take care of the household linen? That puts an end at once to the plan; she will be of no use, and as to eating, those thin people are always large eaters."

"I am thinking, however, that she must have grown stouter and stronger since I saw her," replied Herr Gick, the Councillor of Commerce, persuasively. "She has been put out to board with the Bailiff's wife, her aunt by the mother's side, and I am sure that with the good living of that house she will have grown stronger."

"Yes, and she is certain therefore to have a large appetite," still objected Catherine, adroitly veering round; "and you had better consider well what her food will cost."

In spite, however, of Catherine's efforts, the plan *was* carried into effect, and Lena was sent for to *Uncle Gick's*. This was regarded by the family as

a very auspicious circumstance, as they of course inferred that the uncle would bequeath his property to Lena. I may add that the whole family was at that time in considerable anxiety about the will of Herr Gick, and they thought it better any way that a relation should be with him than that he should be left alone with the dreaded Catherine.

The Bailiff's wife accordingly sent off the faithful nurse of her children, saying, however, that it was an exceedingly unjust thing to remove the child whom she had brought up from her earliest years, just now when she was beginning to be of some use to her. But she was in truth too kind-hearted really to stand in the way of the child's good, or to deprive her of the chance of inheriting her uncle's wealth; and besides, she shared with the whole family in an antipathy to the old housekeeper, and thought it very desirable to rescue the inheritance from the danger of its ever falling into her grasp.

So Lena, after a sorrowful farewell, left the Bailiff's family, and came to her new and dreary home. "Homesick I was, certainly," she would afterwards say, in reference to this time. "I was afraid of Catherine, and I felt sorry to leave aunt's children, and here I found everything so clean and orderly." New and strange as this might be to her at first, she soon became accustomed to the order and cleanliness of the new home, and felt that it gave a *true sense* of comfort. Her uncle *too seemed to her so odd*. He wore a dressing-gown of *Indian chintz*, which he had bought forty

years ago at an auction in Amsterdam. This amused her very much. It was figured with elephants and camels, and negroes, and palm-trees. Every day she found out something fresh on this dressing-gown, which had been patched in several places by Catherine with pieces of common calico print of modern patterns. Besides this, he wore in the morning a linen night-cap. "This was too droll," she said, "and I so much wished that I had some one to laugh with me at these oddities, but nobody ever came; and once when Catherine saw me laugh, she told me angrily that the young eagles would some day pick out my eyes if I laughed at my uncle."

Though Lena was far from being the slim, delicate person which her uncle had represented her, but was, on the contrary, a strong, healthy girl, who had thriven well on her aunt's living, yet in spite of this she proved herself a very in-offensive inmate, and her never-ending gaiety won over at length the leathern hearts of even the uncle and Catherine.

"I never could have borne the great dulness and loneliness of that place," she said, "if I had not pictured to myself that I was a spell-bound princess, and my uncle an ancient magician. And so I got to derive amusement out of the very simplest incidents that could possibly occur. But there never came a knight to carry me off."

"*In this house,*" said Lena, "*I learned good, careful cookery, for my uncle was continually*

saying that it required no skill to cook well with a large quantity of provisions ; but to furnish a good dinner out of little, or indeed from nearly nothing, that was the true science of cookery. With this he related an instructive anecdote about the cook of a King of Prussia, who once made up an excellent ragout from some old gloves."

Catherine really did her best, and Lena had abundant opportunities of drawing comparisons and coming to conclusions as to whether the quality or quantity of food were of the greater importance. However, she continued to be a very healthy girl, even upon a very moderate allowance for dinner.

The uncle never made the least objection to her merry temper, but he desired her to leave off skipping and jumping as she went along, because this would wear out her shoes too fast, though he gladly allowed singing, since that only wore out the throat. Our good child was not, of course, always in a singing mood ; but whenever her clear voice was heard ringing through the house, her uncle felt much gratified with the thought of his own benevolence in tolerating this, and would say—

"Yes, yes, she may sing as much as she likes."

By degrees Catherine had, to her own astonishment, come to take quite a liking for the ever-contented and obliging Lena, but the uncle's increasing affection for her made the old housekeeper suspicious of *the child*. She had already seen the *uncle one day reading over his will, which had lain duly signed and sealed in his chest for a long*

time past. There was some danger to be apprehended from this proceeding, and this she thought must, at any cost, be averted. By degrees she began to hint to the uncle that a young girl was very expensive in a house, even though no wages were paid to her ; and to point out of how little service she really could be in return. She said she had been thinking over an excellent plan. She had found out a poor old woman who would fetch all the wood and water that they needed to the house for a couple of pieces of bread every day.

"And she, in fact," she said, "would prove of much more use to me than Miss Lena, for I am obliged to wait upon her. I can myself do all the little cooking and household work, and mending, but I have not strength enough to carry the water ; and two people and a half-grown girl, all occupied in waiting on a single gentleman, would surely be a great extravagance."

"But she is a sensible little creature," replied the gentleman, timidly.

"Oh, sensible enough," replied Catherine ; "but I am not a half-witted person myself, and I cannot see what we want with more sense in the house. What there is to be done and thought of you and I can easily manage ; and more intellect than this will be quite superfluous. You have never counted up even what that young girl's linen costs."

In spite of all this, the uncle would scarcely have been brought over to part with the child, had not Providence designed to take Lena higher.

and higher still in the family. Her cousin, the wife of the Councillor of Finance—who had tried a variety of experiments with all sorts of servants, errand-girls, chambermaids, parlour-maids, housemaids, and cooks—being in want of a servant, condescendingly bethought her of her young orphan niece, who she remembered must, during all these past years, have been growing into womanhood, and she resolved that she would make a new experiment with her.

After many representations had been made on the matter, her uncle thought that perhaps it was his duty to let Lena become an inmate in a house where she would have so much greater an opportunity for improvement in mind and manners; and Lena found herself, as if by magic, transported from her uncle's parsimonious home into the luxurious household of her grand relative, the wife of the Councillor of Finance, in whose mansion were all sorts of tables and cabinets filled with little elegant useless knick-knacks, among which Lena was afraid to move, lest she should overturn some of these ornamental things.

Lena's occupations were varied. First she had to put the room to-rights, to dust all the thousand and one little things, china shepherds and shell-work ladies, feather ornaments and unused ink-stands, little porcupines studded with fancy tooth-picks, small *saucers for rings*, bracelet-holders, and *a crucifix placed in juxtaposition with a vase intended to contain sugar*.

This employment lasted for a time, until Lena had become accustomed to the new phase of life and the manners of the society with whom she now mingled. At first she could not remember even the names of the different rooms or articles of furniture, and called the drawing-room the parlour, and the boudoir the back-room, while with her the what-not was simply the glass-case. One day, while dressing her cousin's hair, a rap at the house door announced a visitor.

"Make haste, Lena," said her cousin; "if I am asked for, deny me."

Lena ran off in great haste; she did not know what reply she ought to make, but she thought that truth must be right, so she said—

"Will you walk a little farther, for my cousin is just dressing, and will soon be ready?"

Only imagine the consequence of this blundering message, which displayed such rustic want of tact. And when, at the end of a quarter of an hour, the cousin appeared with a face all smiles and serenity, who could even have guessed the clouds of wrath which had so lately discharged themselves on the head of poor innocent Lena, who was forthwith desired to drop the word cousin, and to say only, the Lady of the Chief Councillor of Finance.

By degrees Lena learnt better to comprehend the ways of the family, and she was then found more useful than most of her predecessors; but she often said, *in later years*, that it was in this home she felt herself in greatest danger of losing her light-heartedness.

"I was not fitted for such a house," she said. "I never could bring myself to feel the smallest interest in any of the little elegancies which were entrusted to my care; they all seemed to me so useless. If I had not had a good laugh now and then, at the immense importance attached to these superfluities, and if I had not also called to mind that it was God's will I should be placed in this new kind of life, I never could have endured it. I seemed almost to have forgotten my singing in this home of my grand cousin. She had two half-grown-up daughters; they were slender, black-haired girls, much too forward for their age, and they chiefly distinguished me from the other servants by treating me more haughtily. They were striving continually to impress their ignorant cousin with awe by their great learning, which they had brought from a boarding-school; but I was not easily put out of countenance by it. They would ask, 'Lena, do you know the names of the seven kings of Rome?' 'No,' I would say, 'I only know how to make barley-soup.' 'What nonsense!' they would answer. 'Now then, tell us how many years the Emperor Nero reigned?' 'Too long, at any rate, if he only reigned a week,' I would say. 'I know more than enough already of such a bad, cruel man, and I do not wish to hear anything else about him. But now it is my turn to ask questions—How long does it take to make melted butter?'"

Thus Lena was not to be outdone in knowledge; but when they all came to talk of music, the poor

girl could not answer her pert cousins. They received every week two lessons from Madame Coules, the first pianiste in the neighbourhood, and they each practised upon the piano two whole hours daily, and Lena could not contrive to get any practice ; for even if they had not told her repeatedly, as they did, that her voice was ill-managed and altogether uncultivated, yet she would never have ventured to let it be heard.

Even these practising hours and music-lessons were not quite so complete as the wife of the councillor considered they ought to be. She thought that the practising should be superintended by a second or third-rate music-teacher, and a suitable person was soon found in the music-master of the neighbouring orphan school, and whom Madame Coules described as a modest, unassuming man, who was accustomed to turn over the pages of her music-book when she played at concerts, and to assist her at her *soirées dansantes*.

The new teacher was a continual object of compassion to Lena, though she had never exchanged a word with him ; but he had such very melancholy eyes, and Lena could not bear to see anyone look sad. Indeed, she never even read the newspapers, because she did not like to hear of calamities which she could not relieve. She did her best to cheer up Herr Lightheart, the melancholy music-master. When she had at times to give him a cup of coffee she sweetened it so much when she poured it out that a great sediment of

sugar remained at the bottom of the cup. Then she placed in the window-seat, near the piano, all the brightest blossoming plants she could find ; and, on some slight pretext or other, she fetched the gold-fish and the canary-bird, and put them close beside him, that they might cheer him. But it was all in vain. He even threw a cloth over the cage of the canary, and, while deeply absorbed in thought, pulled in pieces some of the prettiest blossoms of the rhododendron. But when she met his melancholy eyes, her cheerful ones seemed to please him more than the gold-fish, or the flowers, or the bird, and a kind of friendly understanding grew up between them, even when, as yet, they had never interchanged any further conversation than "Be so kind," or "Thank you, Fraulein Lena."

On one occasion when the family had gone on a visit to a princely mansion in the neighbourhood they had forgotten to countermand the lesson of the music-master, so that he came as usual and found Lena alone, singing to herself, while she was collecting various articles which had been left in the suite of rooms by the attendant of her haughty cousins.

"You have a good voice," said the grave Herr Lightheart, bowing to her.

"Do you really think so?" she said, much delighted. "Now, that does give me pleasure, because you *really understand* music ; but in this *house there is so much scientific music that I never venture to let myself be heard.*"

"What can you sing, Fraulein Lena?" he asked.

"Oh! only some songs which I have picked up by chance," she said. "I have not had any lessons since I left school, and I fancy that my songs must all be very old-fashioned, for they were all in an old music-book of my mother's, who died a great while ago."

"Well, tell me one of them."

"We are sitting so happy together,"

she said, rather shyly.

Herr Lightheart had already opened the piano, as he had been expecting his young pupils, so he sat down, and began playing the accompaniment to this fine song. Lena began with a clear voice, to which Herr Lightheart joined his, and they sang more and more boldly to the end of that song of which we have given but the pleasant commencement.

Neither the eyes nor the voice of Herr Lightheart seemed melancholy now, as he cheerfully proposed another song.

"The ship bounds through the waves,"

began Lena. The music-master again accompanied her with his voice, and with the piano also, and next they sang through

"I bring back my songs, and with them my trust."

"What others have you in your music-book?" said the master, with a voice so cheerful that nobody would have thought it could be his.

"Thou, thou art my heart's-case,"

said Lena, a little shyly. Never till this moment had she thought that there were a great many songs in her mother's music-book which were very embarrassing ; but there was no help for it, and it was of no use hesitating. Lightheart had begun already, so she was obliged to sing the song through to its pathetic close—

“ Yes, yes, 'tis one love that unites us.”

“ Let us have another,” said the persevering teacher, who seemed to-day quite a different man.

“ Never am I so well and gay
As when thou art near me,”

said Lena, with faltering voice ; and she could never have been able to get through this very affectionate song if he had not had the tact gravely to criticise various defects in Lena's singing, which helped her out of her embarrassment till they came to the end of the ballad.

“ Why, Miss Lena, what song are you singing ?” said the astonished cook, who, coming in just then, brought our enthusiastic singers back to the real every-day life which they were just forgetting. Herr Lightheart immediately took up his hat, and his eyes resumed their usual melancholy expression. But Lena, though she blushed deeply, looked at him in so kind and friendly a manner, and that he might not feel annoyed, she thanked him so heartily for the trouble *he had taken* with her, that he even *ventured to offer to improve her fine voice by a few lessons if she could obtain her aunt's leave for him to do so.*

The wife of the Councillor of Finance was perfectly astonished at the assurance of her poor young cousin in wishing to take music-lessons, and her two daughters burst into a loud rude laugh at the bare idea of such a thing; but as, on further consideration, it was thought that Lena's voice might prove of some use in the choruses at the family concerts, her request to take lessons was generously granted, but she was to receive them on such evenings only as the family were out. These lessons could be taken very seldom, because Lena's numerous occupations prevented it. But they were very entertaining lessons, for there was usually more talking than singing. Lightheart found that Lena's kind blue eyes won his confidence marvelously, so that he entrusted to her all the sorrows and privations that fall to the lot of an unfriended young man, and all the earnest struggles of his spirit against the trials and poverty of his life. Lena sympathized heartily with him, had ever a word of consolation to offer, and could always remind him of some one whose lot was far worse than his own. She gave him, too, such amusing descriptions of her own past life that his sorrowing thoughts were dispelled by her cheerfulness, and he went back after each lesson to his professional duties with a less burdened heart.

By-and-by his look became less sad, and his eyes brightened as he came near the house of the Councillor of Finance. But one evening, when *after a longer interruption than usual to his lessons,*

Lena was again able to receive one, he approached her in so animated a manner, and spoke so rapidly yet so confidentially to her, that Lena did not know what to think.

“What has happened to you, Herr Lightheart?” she said, rather timidly; but he opened the piano, preluded with spirit, and in a manner unusual with him, and began to sing an air in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*—that exquisite song beginning with the words, “Give me thine hand, love.” Lena knew the music well, but she was so surprised at the excited manner of the usually grave teacher, that she could not open her mouth. He rose from the piano and told her, not in the accents of song, but in plain and sober prose, that though he had not like the minstrel in the song he had just sung a castle to offer her with his hand and heart, yet he had now a humble but comfortable home, for he had just received the appointment of music-master to one of the higher schools of the town.

Not a word on a subject like this had ever before passed between them, yet this proposal of his did not come unexpectedly to Lena, and as she afterwards confessed to her husband, it appeared to her perfectly natural. But now they seemed to have changed characters, for it was Lena’s turn to become grave, and to remind him of their poverty, and of the hardships they might have to endure in the future. But Lightheart was full of hope, and skilfully answered all objections; and Lena was not inexorable. To what humble-minded and

affectionate girl in her position would not a hundred florins a-year on the part of one she was dear to have seemed sufficient? But the true question for such young people to ask themselves is, Can they accomplish what they undertake? Is it not but too probable that these generous young girls who thus undervalue worldly wealth will afterwards distress their husbands and themselves when they are compelled to wear a bonnet two summers without a new ribbon, and will worry them with allusions to the various presents which some husbands make to their wives?

But never was this the case with Lena, nor was it what she promised when she entered the home of her husband. "Come what will, I shall be contented," she said; and she faithfully kept her word.

"A home! Do you know what that must be to a young girl who has been pushed about the world like the fifth wheel of a carriage?" said Lena, in later days, when she had become a widow. "A place to which one belongs, a heart that belongs to oneself, and an eye that looks on you with affection, and welcomes you with gladness. Ah, had it pleased God to have granted me but one week in my own home, I should have had no right to complain. I remember that during the first year of my marriage I had a short illness, but how happy it seemed to me even to be ill under such circumstances. Not that at any time of my life I have been left uncared for in sickness; but people regarded my *illness only as a calamity* for themselves, and con-

sidered that I ought to think myself very fortunate to be allowed to keep my bed. My husband was but a very awkward nurse; and as we had no servant, he was obliged to bring the whole contents of the larder into my room, which to be sure required no great labour, that I might show him what he was to cook, and how to cook it. But then it was quite a cheering thing to see how anxiously he bent over me, and how happy he was when I got better. I was even helped to get well by laughing at his odd ways, for he handled everything very awkwardly, desirous as he was to do his best.

“ We had our struggles in gaining a livelihood, for we had nothing to begin with, and we were obliged to procure our furniture, little by little, out of my husband’s slender salary. My poor good husband was not always so lively as on that evening when he sang Mozart’s song of ‘*La ci darem*’ so joyously. He had always been of a melancholy temperament, and was now saddened besides by anxieties about our scanty means. It depressed him to think that with all his perseverance, and earnest application to his duty throughout life, he could by all this assiduity scarcely earn a sufficient maintenance for his wife and children. I soothed him as well as I could, and I now found the use of Catherine’s skill in cooking, and making a good deal out of a very little; though it is true that I never attained to the skill of the cook of the *King of Prussia*, nor indeed had I any gloves

as he had, nor any of the highly-flavoured ingredients which doubtless he could add to them.

"In the course of years we had six children. How I was to bring them all up I really could not tell, and now I found the experience which I had had at the house of my aunt the Bailiff's wife of great service to me. I often tied a string round my waist, by which I drew a little carriage, and thus walked slowly to and fro, knitting or sewing as I best could ; and I now had to learn besides a number of things quite new to me ; such as to make men's garments, and to mend them neatly. I had little time for sitting down to my piano, but my singing served me a good turn, for my children always liked to hear it, and would keep quiet and not trouble me for many a quarter of an hour, so long as I remembered a song for them. I used to seem to myself like that violin-player in the story who was obliged to play to the wolf during the whole night to keep him from eating him up."

Three of the children died early, but three grew up to be their mother's joy, and the remembrance of their childhood, and their happy home, was dear to them all their life long. Their mother's skill in finding out inexpensive pleasures for them was inexhaustible. She contrived to cut a whole set of furniture out of an old pack of cards given by a friendly neighbour. As to her stories, the adventures were so marvellous that they even exceeded the children's idea of possibility ; as for example, *when she related* how the whale went to pay a visit



to the elephant, taking her knitting-needles with her, and such-like wondrous doings.

Lena's family had been at first greatly dissatisfied with her marriage, for though they felt relieved by knowing that the orphan was provided for, yet they feared that at some future time it might bring a still greater burden to them. But when they saw how cheerful and contented Lena was with her position, and how far she was from troubling the family with appeals for assistance, they became reconciled to her choice, and sometimes gave her more substantial proofs of their remembrance. Now and then there would come from the aunt, the wife of the Bailiff, a small bag of flour, or a fat hen, or a little pot of lard, to help out the meagre housekeeping. The wife of the Councillor of Finance would occasionally send an old left-off dress. Then came bonnets of all shapes, and trunks full of all those nameless articles of dress which are to be found in every house when a general clearance is made. Old bodices, torn silk reticules, faded ribbons, worn-out chemisettes, and veils full of holes—things which we hardly like to throw into the fire, and which as we look at we say in the overflowing of a generous heart, "I wish I knew anyone to whom this would prove of some kind of use." Even Uncle Gick, who had been won over to be godfather, was represented afterwards in the household by his gift of a silver spoon, which had not been unaccompanied by many valuable *remarks on the very doubtful blessing of a large family of children.*

Lena received thankfully all gifts which came—even the miscellaneous articles sent by her cousin—for there was always something or other among them which seemed a great treasure to the children. She would let them draw lots for these, and then the winning excited great laughter and fun, though the little folks were at a loss afterwards to know what to do with them, and gave their mother the trouble of taking care of them. After a time she commenced a little doll manufactory, and her productions, dressed in the old finery of the wife of the councillor, were sold to some profit.

Lena actually succeeded in bringing up her children in the pleasant belief that nobody in the world was happier than they were ; and the new patches put on the knees and elbows of their dresses were regarded by them in the light of ornaments. When her Charles complained that the sheriff's son Frederick, or the bailiff's son Otto, had been boasting that their fathers were better off than his, she showed them that beautiful *verse* in the Bible, "They that be wise shall shine like the stars," and told them that there were no beautiful texts like that in the Bible about being the son of a sheriff or a bailiff. Her husband often thought that her way of teaching the children to keep a cheerful and contented spirit was somewhat unphilosophical, and even untrue, and that nothing was gained by letting them think that the cheapest things were best ; but that they ought to *be taught* to be contented with a cheap thing, even



though it was inferior. But the wife took her own womanly view of the matter, and said—

“If they are but good-tempered and happy now, they will understand it all well enough by-and-by, as they grow up.”

Lena needed all her cheerfulness; for this precious gift had not been bestowed, as indeed it rarely is, in vain. The husband was often ill, and much troubled with his eyesight, which became dim in early life, though his children were then partly grown-up, and were able to read to their father, or to write for him. He was compelled to relinquish his professional engagement, and his naturally melancholy tendencies now quite bowed him down into hopelessness and dejection, as he saw the position of his family.

“Ah ! I remembered then,” said Lena, “what my uncle used to say, that to be light-hearted when one has plenty is no great virtue; but to keep up a cheerful spirit when all is going wrong, that is true wisdom, and this can only be learned in God’s school.”

And did Lena really keep her cheerful spirit? No complaining word ever added to the sorrows of her depressed husband. She brought into practice all the little devices which she had learned in her youth, when she had lived with the bailiff’s wife. She had there acquired a little knowledge of the culture of fields and gardens, and she now applied it to a genteel profession, for she became the chief planner of the gardens of the neighbourhood. From *Catherine’s old recipes* she made and baked

aniseed-bread, and little cakes, which had a ready sale. While living with her grand cousin she had learned to embroider beautifully ; and this art she and her little daughter now practised. The husband gave such lessons as a man half-blind could still manage to do.

" We shall be very rich some day," she would say cheerily to her husband. " Money is coming in from all quarters. Even Charles gives lessons to some idle schoolfellows for a penny each ; and little Lewis has begun a very profitable trade as a naturalist, by selling cockchafers and beetles. We have now only to take care that we don't ask an unfair interest on our capital."

And the lowly teacher's home had its own music. When the poor father could no longer be cheered by anything that she could say, the mother would begin to sing—

" We are sitting so happy together,
We love each other so well ; "

and she would tell the children how she once stuffed a goose to this song. And then she delighted the little ones by the description of a fat goose which she told them they should some day eat, if only such and such pleasant little things should but come to pass ; and the young party became quite merry at the picture of the meal, while the mother was pouring out their portions of skimmed milk and black bread for supper.

But the husband died, and Lena's gay spirit became a quiet and subdued spirit for a long while ;

though at length the old joyousness of heart awoke again. "My poor husband would not thank me now," she said, "if I had nothing better to give my children than a woe-begone face. Even his last farewell words to me were—'May God ever preserve to thee thy cheerful heart and thy hopeful thoughts; they have been a golden gift to us all!'" And then, too, her children had the precious inheritance of a good father's prayerful blessing, and she used to speak of this with thankfulness throughout her life.

Frau Lightheart's son Charles became now a student in divinity. He passed three examinations with great credit, and brought away from the Lower College several very handsome Christmas presents for his mother and sisters, which he had saved from the money allowed him for wine and other expenses. Lewis, too, was taken into a merchant's house as apprentice, without any premium, on account of his intelligence and activity; and he formed grand schemes of what he meant to do, and of the wonderful speculations which he should some day enter into with some article yet unknown to commerce, as the renowned Dick Whittington once did. Sophy, with her mother, set up a school for teaching knitting, which was much frequented by the young girls of the neighbourhood, who loved to listen to the pleasant stories which the good widow knew so well how to tell.

"Certainly, *our living was but scant,*" she would

admit. "The boys grew strong and tall, for which indeed I thanked God ; but their father's old coats could no longer be cut up for their jackets, and their clothes cost me a good deal. Charles had two vacations in the year, and Lewis was at these times allowed to come home also ; and it would make my heart ache sometimes, because I could not give them a little more pleasure. There were times when I did not know how to give them the comfort of a well-warmed room during these holidays. Then I told them to go out and fetch some of their old schoolfellows, with their sisters, and I would play a tune on the piano while they danced to warm themselves—and I must say a right good dance it was. Sometimes, too, one of my young scholars would bring in a basket full of apples, and then we were all as merry as could be."

Her family were not very generous to Frau Lightheart and her children. Her aunt, the bailiff's wife, had died, and the wife of the councillor had gone to live far off at Munich. As to the uncle, the children had, at the proper times, announced to him the event of their confirmation, when he always sent them each a crown-piece. He was, in his later days, looked after still more watchfully by Catherine, and thus he did nothing further for his god-children.

Lena did not talk much to her children of her great sorrows, as widowed mothers so often do. She never used to say to them, "What a sad thing *it is to be left a widow with all this family de-*

pendent on me, and what a great trouble it will be to me if you do not appreciate all I have had to bear for your sakes." On the contrary, she would say, "I am so thankful that God has been pleased to spare you all to me, and I feel sure that you will prove my joy and pride. I can do nothing but plant a rose-tree on your father's grave, but good sons are the best monument for a true-hearted and kind father." Besides, the mother understood so well how to make her little home a bright and social one, that it ever seemed to her children the dearest and sweetest of all worldly abodes. Sophy worked diligently, and helped gladly, enduring privations with cheerfulness, in order that there might be a little treat when the brothers came home.

Charles was drawing near to the close of his college course when a friend, the son of a wealthy farmer, invited him to spend his last vacation at his father's house, where he could occupy a small room in which he might better prepare himself for his final examination than in the poor little room in his own home. The young man found great comfort in this nice apartment, and in the substantial housekeeping, where he did not, as at home, always see the platters emptied.

One evening his kind host suddenly entered the room, saying, "Now, my young lights of the church, which of you two will preach a sermon to-morrow? Both the clergymen at Klatzingen are ill, and the Dean, who has heard that there are two hopeful young candidates for the ministry here, has

sent his carriage to fetch over one of you to preach to-morrow morning. Which of you will go?"

To prepare on Saturday a sermon for Sunday is no slight work for a young student, and the farmer's son at once declined it. Charles was a better scholar, and had a very excellent memory, so that he thought he might manage to do it. Moreover, he was too shy to persist in refusing. So he sat in the Dean's carriage with a heavy heart, reading over the gospel for the morrow. The promise of the farmer, that he and his family would all come over to church next day, did not add to his courage. He would rather this time have preached to an assembly of ghosts, like Oetingen, than to the merry, laughing girls with whom he had associated in the past week.

He soon expressed to the kind-hearted old Dean all his difficulties, freely confessing his fears and anxieties.

"I do not say," said the Dean, "that young men can possibly be too serious and anxious; although, when you come to view your duties even more deeply and impressively, and when your thoughts have become more intent on the Lord, whose words you utter, than on the people to whom you are to explain them, many needless anxieties will disappear. We old clergymen have too our own dangers, perhaps even worse ones than those of younger men. We have ever to keep watch on ourselves, lest the duties of our office should be performed in a merely mechanical and formal

manner, when we have to set forth all through the year the same truths to the same flock. I have heard of a good cure for this state of things, which a venerable clergyman once told me he had devised for himself. When he was asked how he found it possible, during the many years on which he had preached every Sunday, to speak with the same fervour and earnestness with which he had delivered his first sermon, he replied, 'I have ever borne in mind when about to perform divine service that there might possibly be some individual present who had entered the church for the last time in his life, and that, through God's blessing, it might be my words which would prove the saving of his soul.' "

These remarks affected Charles very much. He looked in a new light on the gospel in his hand, and on himself as a worker in the Lord's vineyard; and when next day he entered the pulpit he heeded not the large and unfamiliar congregation then assembled, nor the sly and half-laughing looks with which the farmer's thoughtless family entered their pew. He thought only of that one soul whom his words might, perhaps, serve to prepare for a peaceful death-bed and a glorious resurrection; and there was a warmth and glowing earnestness in his words which his friends had never thought could have animated that calm and retiring nature.

He was a little tired when he entered the parsonage, where *the Dean's* wife and servants had

preceded him, and had been speaking highly of his sermon.

During the dinner the wife of the Dean exclaimed with some surprise, "The Councillor of Commerce, Herr Gick, has sent to inquire the name of the young clergyman who preached to-day, and to beg that he will call and see him."

"The Councillor of Commerce!" said the Dean, with astonishment. "Does he ever come to church then?"

"He has only done so for the last few weeks," said the lady, "since the sudden death of his old housekeeper, Catherine. It seems that he has become timid now that he is left to himself."

Charles promised to go to him, and he bethought himself that this must be his old uncle of whom he had never heard a word since he sent him that crown-piece at his confirmation, with the oft-repeated assurance that he was now getting old and needed repose, and therefore could not receive visitors. So, without making any allusion to his relationship, he went after dinner to call on the old gentleman.

One of those strange events which, although of daily occurrence, seldom come to light, happened at this juncture. During the simple but fervent discourse of the young minister, this old and long-hardened heart received a gleam of light from a higher world; a painful thought had come over him that life had higher duties than that of carefully and anxiously guarding the wealth

which he had so parsimoniously hoarded, and which had become his Mammon. By the help of this new light he looked back on the past, and saw behind him a wasted life; and now he anxiously sought a succouring hand which should grasp his, and lead him by a safe way out of the darkness that hung around him. "I have been an idle labourer in God's vineyard," said he, with trembling voice, on receiving his nephew, whom he did not recognise, "and I fear I shall soon have reached the twelfth hour. Oh, tell me, am I not now too late?"

And now the young clergyman stood before the failing man in all his own inexperience of life and its snares, and it was his place to become a preacher of repentance, and a proclaimer of the mercy of the Most High. Thus, unexpectedly, the noblest and most difficult work of his calling lay before him. But faith makes strong, and the exhortation he had already so successfully delivered in the pulpit he was again enabled to urge, relying in the strength of that word which was confided to him, of One who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. By his well-directed efforts the despairing man was provided with a staff on which to lean in his last days' sojourn on earth. The old man was reluctant to let his young friend go away, and as they proceeded to less serious topics, he found ere long that the young stranger before him was the godson whom he had never before seen, and great indeed was his aston-

ishment at this discovery. The picture of the little Lena came again before his mind's eye, and he remembered the time when she had for so long enlivened the dulness of his house. Charles strove as far as possible to pass lightly over the struggles and privations which his mother had endured, and promised on her behalf that she would soon come to see his uncle. The old man and his godson at length parted, but not before a strong feeling of attachment had grown up between them.

Charles returned to his mother's home on the eve of his departure for the University, where he was going for the last time. He had related to his mother but little of the conversation which had passed between his uncle and himself, regarding much that the old man revealed as strictly confidential.

Charles's clothes were laid out upon the table, and grave councils were held as to how they might be repaired at little expense, and without incurring any debt. The mother thought she might turn one of the coats, "Then," she said, "it will make a nice college coat." As to the other coat, Sophy jocosely remarked, "that she thought they had better sprinkle it well with Weller's famous balm, which was so efficacious in curing baldness;" when a letter sealed with black was brought to Frau Lightheart. It told her that the uncle was dead, and that she was to inherit all his property save a few handsome legacies to other relations of his. Well, no sorrow had befallen her, and what was

there in this unexpected piece of good news that should cause her to sit down and weep bitterly?

"What can be the matter?" said Sophy, alarmed.

"You cannot have understood this news rightly," said Charles, who had glanced at the papers.

"Oh no," said the mother, "I understand it all; but my grief is, that your good father, who bore so many anxieties for you, did not live to see this. But ah," she said, smiling even amidst her tears, "if your father had but known that Charles, his little Giddy-pate, as he always called him, had thus won his uncle's heart and all this rich inheritance, he would indeed have marvelled. How often he used to say,—‘As to Lewis, I have no anxiety on his account, he will be a ready-witted man, and make his way in the world. But for Charles, our little Giddy-pate, you must take care that he does not lose the little he may get;’ and now it has turned out that this Giddy-pate has been the means of making us all so rich." And then she gave free scope to her natural cheerfulness.

It was soon rumoured that Frau Lightheart had become an heiress, and everybody estimated the worth of the property at fifty thousand pounds. The news spread like wildfire through the town. The poor beggars, already familiar with Lena's house, came now in troops, and in the overflowing of her kind heart, the good creature gave so much *sway out of her scantily-furnished house,*

that at length Charles and Sophy had to check her generosity, reminding her that they must have something to live upon till the new supply of funds should really come in, for as yet it had only been announced. The merchant with whom Lewis resided, an upright and experienced man of business, offered to take upon himself the management of the property, and urged Frau Lightheart in the most friendly manner to appoint a trustee to act with her. She acknowledged the necessity of this, for she herself felt that she could not help giving away right and left to all who needed assistance. The property was really not so immense as people thought, for the old man had not made a good use of his capital, owing to his avarice and over-cautious anxiety in hoarding it; but at any rate it far surpassed the grandest expectations of the little family.

It was decided that the capital when invested should remain untouched, and that they should live on the income arising from the interest. Lena led with her family a cheerful and useful life. Now she could offer her children a pleasant and comfortable home, and little could anyone have dreamed that that cold dead heap of money which the uncle had accumulated should one day give so much lively joy to many hearts.

In bygone days, while Lena was living with the bailiff's wife, there had often been a controversy between her aunt and an old servant about the *merry child*.

"She will have enough to weep about, some day," said the old servant with pity. "She who has been born with such a light heart is no doubt destined to bear some hard shocks of adversity."

"I say she will outlive it, so that she will meet with good fortune at last," said the aunt.

And thus they were both right.

And Frau Lena lived long after, becoming a grandmamma, and she sang to her grandchildren the same songs which she sang when about to become a bride. Young and old loved to gather about her, and to bask in the sunshine of her happy spirit. Till the day of her death her lips poured forth the expression of her joy and thankfulness.

She would often remark in her old age, "I am very glad of one thing, that I have never let any pleasant hour pass without fully enjoying it."

From her son's hands she received on her death-bed the last consolation, the Lord's Supper, and looking at him with serenely bright eyes, she exclaimed with fervour—

"Beloved Charles, He who best knows my heart knows that I die as happily as I have lived."

These were the last words of Lena.

II.

The Proud Heart.

"Thou hast will'd it and wilt not mourn,
 Thou hast done it and well hast borne;
 Bide thee on that proud height alone,
 Where free winds waving round thee moan.
 But should the worn heart draw thee back,
 Would'st thou the vale of Meekness track?
 Open, with balm for every smart,
 Stand Father's house, and Father's heart."

"Of all the words uttered by tongue or pen
 The saddest are these—'It might have been.'
 Ah! well for us all some sweet hope lies
 Deeply buried from human eyes;
 And in the Hereafter angels may
 Roll the stone from the grave away."—WHITTIER.

It is not often that painters, poets, or musicians choose or find as a companion for life one who has a highly-gifted musical, poetical, or artistic nature; a tenderly strong spirit in which every chord touched by their master-hand re-echoes with sweeter, deeper tone. And if this lot does befall them, yet alas, in this imperfect world one can but fear lest so complete a harmony of souls should only too easily be disturbed amid the discords which must arise in domestic life. It is by no means impossible, and yet it is difficult for a woman devoted to art to preserve that steady interest in, *and that observant eye for the minute details which*

go to make the character of the thoroughly good housewife. And so it happens that to these men so gifted of Nature, who seldom know how to secure a firm footing for themselves in the world, a kind Providence often allots sober, practical helpmates, who take pains not only to keep their careless husbands in proper trim in all that regards the outward man, but exercise a rational care too over their generally precarious incomes, so as to gather around them the necessary comforts of home.

And yet, important as it ever is to keep the golden medium, it is especially important here. Hearts must understand each other even where the minds cannot. The dull, sober wife, who may be thoroughly competent to keep her husband's home well ordered, but who knows not how to keep his heart warm by her own deep love, is, with all her pains-taking and good endeavours, really little more than a zealous servant and not a companion, and in such a case the highest blessing of wedlock is lost both to her and her husband.

I have been led into this digression at the beginning of my tale by the thought that a similar combination of prose and poetry often exists not only between husband and wife, but between a whole land and its people. And thus it seems to me to with regard to the picturesque Switzerland. At the foot of those romantic mountains whose summits rise high into the bright pure ether, on the shores of those wondrous lakes, hidden in secluded valley-like valleys, we picture to our minds that

the dwellers there must be a race of poets and dreamy thinkers, rich only in tales and traditions, in songs and melodies.

Now, all this is indeed to be found in Switzerland, but it is merely the exception, and not the rule. For the most part the inhabitants are a vigorous, active, industrious race, sober and practical, and not only deriving from their often scanty soil all that it is capable of producing, but knowing well too how to turn to account even their beautiful and magnificent mountains, the mental culture of their daughters, and the strong arms of their sons. Thus, besides the grand and glorious, but often unproductive beauty of nature, they have brought prosperity and all the comforts of life into their native land. And as the union of the poet-husband with the somewhat prosaic wife becomes hallowed by sincere affection, so does a strong bond of love bind the sober, practical Switzer to his wondrous mountain home. The persevering trader carries his gains over land and sea back to the Fatherland to enjoy them there ; the heart of the rough soldier who has taken service in foreign ranks bounds when he hears the old familiar strain of his native country ; the peasant girl, all untaught as she is in sentimental fancies, bursts into tears of joy when, even after a short separation, she looks again on the village where she was born. The poetry of the Swiss is the love of their native home. And thus my remarks need be no reproach, they are but a *recognition* of the kindly compensations of Provi-

dence which we find everywhere if we only look with an attentive eye on mankind and their relations. Even Switzerland, with all its freedom, has an aristocracy of its own which should be judged not by what it does, but by what it is and has.

The unusually active life of Swiss women, at least in particular cantons, is very striking to the traveller. It is not merely that they have there as in all other countries female teachers, post-office and telegraph clerks, or that women instead of men are to be found acting as timekeepers, and standing with outstretched arms by the railway; but there are cantons in which even the housewife or mother by no means thinks her calling completed by the fulfilment of the mere domestic duties. Her share in life's work consists not alone in keeping the household accounts, but strict attention to the business itself often falls to her lot as well. The wife makes clocks, gives lessons, carries on a millinery business, or keeps a little shop, as the case may be, without the least injury to her social position; and acts with ease and grace as hostess in her drawing-room, which, however simple in its style, contains the useful adjunct of a small select library, and an elegant tea-table, as well as a fair show of pictures and sketches, with its albums to turn over, and which in short may lay claim to most things that belong to the adornment of social life.

How far this combination of circumstances is the result of necessity, how far it is a matter of taste, how far it *detracts from the poetry of life between*

husband and wife, between mother and child, nothing but a longer and closer observation could enable us to decide. Any way it gives the woman a sort of self-dependence which surely may be counted a blessing in these days when the natural destiny of the wife seems permitted to be anything so long as it is common-place. Perhaps this kind of self-dependence in the wife is often only a consequence of a false and unhealthy state of the social relations, but as it frequently becomes a necessity, so it may also become a blessing to one who knows how to make a right use of her position. It is quite possible, however, that that feeling of self-dependence in the woman may go too far, and destroy instead of securing the heart's happiness. In proof of this the following story is related :—

There was once a daughter of Switzerland who was not brought up to any way of getting her own living, the child of rich parents, the "beauty," the little princess of the family, almost indeed the belle of the whole town. Hers seemed to be the lot of the flower which adorns the garden while it expands daily into farther beauty. Amelia easily and playfully cultivated, for the grace and adornment of her own life, all the powers of pleasing which had been bestowed upon her, and she became the bright ornament of the social circle in which she so gracefully and joyously moved. If the young girl had any tendencies towards the romantic—and what young maiden's heart has not, even though that heart may beat in the breast of the



practical Switzer?—then one might regret that her love, her first and only love, should have gone on so entirely without hindrance or opposition, like a garden flower blooming in well-cultivated ground. There were no scoldings nor storms, no hostile parents, no disparity of position, no vindictive rival. Oh, no! all passed on most peacefully, and the deep and thorough love between herself and her betrothed was the only thing that people made a marvel of; and yet it was just the very thing that seemed to themselves, and even to the world, the most natural and easy thing that could be.

In the market-place in the centre of the town stood the stately house of the rich merchant Combier, the father of the fair Amelia. At about half an hour's walk out of the town, in the midst of a beautiful park, dwelt Mons. Leblanc, the rich manufacturer. That he was a manufacturer and not a baron no one certainly could have guessed from the pleasant country house and exquisitely planned gardens, nor from the style and bearing of the slender and elegantly dressed lady of the house, and her well-educated daughters. One might have suspected the fact, however, by glancing at a distant corner of the park, where the manufactory was situated, and where the greensward was covered with innumerable hanks of red, blue, and green yarn.

Mons. Leblanc lived on terms of friendly intimacy with Mons. Combier, and if his neighbour's

mode of doing business seemed to him somewhat unsatisfactory, and his speculations often venturesome, yet the daughters of the family, and especially the fair Amelia, the bright ornament of every party, were naturally enough invited to the grand entertainment which was given in honour of the coming home of Louis, the second son, after a long residence in England. Such festivals were very rare in the quiet, sober house of Mons. Leblanc, but on this occasion all was done in good style. The lady of the house had taste and tact, and no prince need have felt ashamed of this evening assembly.

Amelia was standing under the blossoming pomegranate-tree at the entrance of the balcony, her fine figure encircled by graceful and flowing drapery and fragrant with perfume, her dark hair decked with a spray of roses, when the son of the worthy host was introduced to her. With delighted surprise the young man recognised in this blooming rose the little playfellow whose school-bag he had so often carried home in other days. Their young bright glances met, and from this evening none could doubt who was the chosen queen of this young king of the festival; and no one asked from whom came the rare flowers which in fresh succession, from that day forth, sweetly scented Amelia's room.

There were, as we have said, no difficulties nor hindrances in the way of the young lovers, yet *Mons. Leblanc* was rather slow in deciding as to

whether he should give his consent to the wishes of his son.

"You have often heard me say," he remarked, "that the business matters of old Combier do not altogether please me: he attempts too many things, and there is too much luxury in his style of living."

"But, my dear father," said the young man, "I marry the daughter, not the business. Amelia does not care for luxury, and only think what an addition she will be to our family circle!"

"You are right; I have no more to say against it," was the old man's decision.

Still easier was it to gain the consent of Combier himself, and so the family soon celebrated the event by a betrothal party, and Louis had now full right to carry the flowers openly to his beloved affianced one.

A protracted period of engagement is a prevalent custom in Germany, but that

"Hanging and waving in fear and suspense,"

is not to the taste of the Swiss, so that it was somewhat unusual in that land that the betrothal of young Leblanc and Amelia lasted nearly a year. This period was necessary in order to give time for the completion of the pretty dwelling which Mons. Leblanc intended to build for his second son. Henry, the elder son, and his young wife, already occupied an elegant little home below, not far from the brook *which set the machinery of the factory*

at work. The new house destined for Louis was seated near the rising ground, somewhat nearer the father's mansion.

It was a very pleasant amusement for the young couple to draw out and improve the plan of their house, and as well as they could to design in imagination its whole arrangements, from the verandah before the door, overrun with graceful creeping plants, up to the flat roof which was to be embellished with flowering shrubs. Amelia had in her younger days been sent to Munich in order to improve her talent in drawing, and Louis had studied comfort in English houses : all that they knew of the best and brightest was to be combined to make the new home lovely and delightful. Louis wrote to order the furniture. Amelia's *trousseau* was growing into quite a towering pile of

"Bright, shining wool, and linen snowy white,"

when Mons. Leblanc thought it desirable that his son, before entering as a partner into the paternal business, should know a little more of foreign trade, and this plan rendered it necessary that the young man should take a few short journeya.

The pain of these slight separations was always fully compensated by the bright joy of meeting again ; and thus one evening the betrothed lover set off with easy mind and joyous spirit, intending to return after a few days' absence by the way that led him past the well-known garden where he was *sure that an affectionate greeting awaited him.*

He came. There was Amelia. He recognised the slight figure in the little pavilion at the corner ; she looked up ; she well knew the roll of his light carriage, yet she did not fly down to meet him at the gate as she always had hitherto done. She only bowed in a kind and gentle manner. Was he deceived, or how was it that his blooming rose had grown so pale ? Bidding the coachman drive on, he hastened into the garden. There sat the young maiden worn with weeping, and pale as he had never before seen her. She rose and offered him her hand ; all was indeed quite changed.

"What is the matter, Amelia—is anyone ill ?" he asked in alarm.

She shook her head, and said gently, almost timidly—

"Then you have not yet heard anything ?"

"No. What should I have heard ?" asked Louis, in anxious dread.

"My father has met with misfortunes—great misfortunes," she said ; "his business has failed, and he has set off for America—not as a defrauder, Louis, not as a defrauder !" she cried, as she observed his brow darken. "He has only taken with him the money he needed for the journey ; my brother will as far as possible arrange everything with his creditors, and my mother is to go to reside for a time with my aunt at Geneva."

"Oh, my poor girl, how much you have suffered," said Louis. "How did it all come on so suddenly ?" he added, *almost stunned by the tidings.*

"Oh," said Amelia, sighing, "perhaps it came on gradually; my father never let anyone look thoroughly into his concerns, not even my brother."

"You shall not be long without a home, my dear," said he, drawing her caressingly towards him. "We will not wait till the new house is finished; they can surely find a little room for us in my father's house."

She shook her head gently in token of refusal, and said mournfully—

"I must say farewell to you at once, Louis."

"But you do not say that in earnest?" said the young man. "You know that, whether poor or rich, you are dearly loved."

"I well know," she said, "that you are noble and kind, but I will never take advantage of that."

Louis did not long contend against this view of a principle of conduct that seemed to him so natural; he was so sure of shortly overcoming this high-minded resolution, that he yielded to her wish when she entreated him to leave her now. Indeed he was anxious to talk the matter over at once with his own family, and to procure a kindly reception for the poor distressed girl.

He was by no means insensible to the fulness of a disaster which had come upon him suddenly like a flash of lightning from the midst of clear sky. He lived in the real world, not in that ideal one where gold and estates are regarded as mere chaff when weighed against the smile of a beloved object; *an ideal standard that, it may be said in passing,*

in those cases even in which it has the strongest hold, is yet the most transient of all things ; but he knew that in this real world of ours he could offer to a wife without fortune a secure and good home.

Louis would have felt himself bound, as a man of honour, to take Amelia to his home, even if it had not seemed to him, in solemn earnest, an impossibility to live without her. He had no great difficulty in bringing his parents into the same view. To them, however, the calamity seemed even greater than it seemed to him. They thought it extremely unfortunate that Louis had thus pledged himself, and indeed the older Leblanc throughout the engagement had at several times felt some misgivings on these matters. But pledged Louis was—that was clear even to them ; and the father, who had climbed his way from the foot of the ladder, and begun life as a poor journeyman dyer, felt an indescribable pride that he could now receive into the shelter of his own well-established home the impoverished daughter of an old mercantile house.

And thus Louis returned to his beloved one, authorized by his parents to urge all the persuasion that affection could dictate. But Amelia remained immovable.

“ My God only knows how unspeakably dear you are to me,” she said, with the old soft sweet voice that sounded so lovingly to his ears ; “ but I cannot come under yonder roof as a burden—I cannot do it. If you were poor and alone in the world, and if we could *work together* in careful patience and

self-denial, I would be yours to-day ; but to enter your family on sufferance, as an object of pity—oh, Louis ! it would be intolerable.”

In vain were all representations, in vain were entreaties, and useless even the remonstrances of Louis’ mother, who, proud woman as she was, felt this rejection with bitter vexation.

Louis was no poet ; he could not tell Amelia with all the eloquence he wished that love alone is worthy of love, and that she would be guilty of treachery to the holiest claims and duties if she followed out the dictates of her pride ; but he had an honest, loving nature, and if he could find no words to express his grief, yet Amelia knew his truth, and felt in her inmost heart how much he suffered.

One morning, when he had determined to make one last effort to persuade her to yield, the young man found, on calling, that Amelia had gone off to see a lady who had a boarding-school in which she had formerly been a pupil for some years. She had gone to seek a situation as governess in this establishment. So it was all over, and Amelia had now travelled far from her fair, quiet, warm, sunny home, and was hoping to find a vocation, a position in life—a rest for her heart.

The office of a young teacher is not free from danger, especially among the half-cultivated nobility of Russia, accustomed to unrestrained power. Amelia passed unharmed, however, amid these dangers ; her deep heart-sorrow rendered her proof against them. She soon showed indeed a singular

talent for teaching, and she went her way in so straightforward a manner, unhurt by neglect, indifferent to homage, in quiet consciousness that she must owe her position to her own endeavours, and that she herself had freely chosen her calling; and thus she remained untouched by the many little vexations which are often to be found in this profession. Her whole life seemed concentrated in her school-room and on those committed to her care, and she was as a faithful mother to many a motherless child, as well as to some who might be deemed such, though they dwelt under the roof of a heartless, worldly-minded mother.

Amelia had quietly resigned all claims to, all hopes of happiness in this world. Firmly and unwaveringly she walked in the path of daily duty. Did she therefore enjoy peace? There is, indeed, always a sense of satisfaction inseparable from the honest fulfilment of duty. This is the blessedness of work, the peace which will reward the diligent worker at the close of the day, a merciful mitigation given by our Heavenly Father of the stern judicial sentence, "By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread;" but this is not the sweet peace, the blessed portion of His children, which the Lord bestows even in this world on those who, with child-like mind, take their daily work from His hand, and fulfil it by looking up to Him every day for strength. Had she really taken her lot from God's hand? Was it not a self-chosen, a false humility, *that she should feel so unwilling to*

receive a gift, even from the hand of affection, while she herself would only too gladly have given everything? And was not love for love in itself a gift rich enough? There was a restless, almost agonized effort in Amelia to make herself necessary, indispensable to others; she could not refrain from seeking in this a confirmation that she had acted rightly in thus voluntarily withdrawing from a position in which she would have been loved for herself alone, and not merely for her powers of usefulness.

Ah! even in this case, dear as Amelia really was, yet she was not irreplaceable. She had been abroad about two years when her sister wrote to tell her that Louis had brought home a young wife to the stately newly-built house on the heights. The young girl pressed her hand closely on her heart when she received the news. There was no one to whom she could have complained; nor, indeed, could she have wished Louis to have remained unmarried. And yet, perhaps, she had almost unconsciously cherished a hope that her father might some day return from America, having regained a portion of his property, or that she herself might have succeeded in earning some such funds of her own as should enable her to enter the wealthy family of her intended husband without the humiliation of poverty. This one thing she well knew, that a dowry earned by herself alone would be highly valued by her friends. But all that was now gone by for ever.

Louisa, her sister, had not tormented herself with the delicate scruples which had so influenced Amelia. She had, without any loss of time, or the smallest misgiving, married the young manufacturer now at the head of her father's establishment, whom she had long known and liked. "It would," she said, "have been a very good thing, no doubt, if their papa had still been in possession of his property, and could have taken Charles under his wing at his first entrance into business. This of course was now impossible, but the good, kind Charles was still very happy as it was; they were both beginning life full of confidence in each other, and even though the business did not go on exactly as they could wish, still it did go on."

Amelia laid down the letter with a low sigh, as she said to herself, "Ah! if Louis had only been poor; if I could only have begun life with him, I could have borne any amount of toil and hardship." But that was all gone by.

In the course of the succeeding year, Amelia commenced a school on her own account, in a northern capital. There she was quite a queen in her own little kingdom, and truly she looked one of the loveliest of queens as she sat amidst the fresh young rose-buds that were blooming about her. There may be women, who having in early life renounced a darling wish of the heart, look coldly and sternly on the young, more especially when the renunciation has been voluntary—wrung from their hearts by their own strong will. The

heart having steeled itself remains steel to the last ; pure, spotless, but hard. But it certainly was never thus with Amelia. She was indeed, as every governess after all must be, in outward matters, strict and exacting in all that related to personal cleanliness and order. "A girl may be very careless and flighty in her arrangements," she would remark, "and yet afterwards become a good and orderly housewife, but she certainly never will become either a good manager or a lady-like woman if she tolerates any want of order and neatness in her own dress and person, especially if it be an untidiness which does not meet the eye while it is connected with external elegance. That is the elegance of a vulgar-minded woman," she would say. Yet the young governess was naturally inclined to be indulgent and gentle, and knew well how to win the love and confidence of the young. The very discipline which she had had to exercise over her own heart had led her to feel tenderly for the sorrows and weaknesses of others, and many of her young pupils loved her as if they had been her own children.

There were three sweet little maidens under her protection, whose mother had been carried from her home and placed on board of a ship to be borne away to a lunatic asylum. Day after day she complied with the entreaties of the poor little ones, and walked by the harbour to see if *mamma was not coming back yet*, till at length the *long-looked-for mother* was taken to her last home, and

the gentle words of their kind governess turned now on that future when they would be with mamma for ever and ever in the bright garden of Heaven. Many a wise counsel fell from her lips, when from time to time, as years passed on, some of her former pupils came to talk over with her any important matters respecting their own hearts and lives; and many a fairy-like young bride introduced to her in joyous triumph the happy man of her choice, while leaning on his arm she walked too with modest pride amid her former young schoolfellows, through the very paths where she once wandered with her lesson-book in hand.

There was no lack of variety, nor indeed of pleasure, in the somewhat cloister life of the boarding-school; and yet a mist would sometimes come over Amelia's eyes when she entered a happy family circle. Now and then, when a mother confided a blooming, smiling little girl to her care, she would sigh in silence, while her thoughts were saying, "Oh, if that child were mine I would not willingly be parted from it for a single hour, nay, not for a moment." There were times, too, when worn out with fatigue and with the cares, small and great, which harassed her, she would for a moment, but for a moment only, feel inclined to share them all with some strong, faithful heart, and yielding up all this much-prized self-dependence, look for guidance and *sympathy* in a husband to whom she *could have ventured to promise a loving submission*. Was she in reality doing God's will, or her

own? was a question which her heart whispered again and again, and it was a question which was never wholly silenced.

Amelia was one day suddenly startled by the arrival of a letter with a black seal, and she trembled as the thought occurred that it might possibly be to convey to her some farewell greeting from the friend who was never forgotten. But it was tidings from the home of her sister Louisa. It told of the death of Charles, and said that his widow was now left alone, in ill health, and with five children. "It is most unfortunate," said the friend who announced the intelligence, "that your brother-in-law should have been so early snatched from his family, just at the time when by his laborious efforts the business had become a very extensive one, and was capable of affording a good maintenance for his wife and family. If given up just now it must be at a great loss, and yet it would be almost impossible that the widow should carry on a large manufactory, and at the same time properly attend to her children, who are all so young. And besides," added the writer, "the very fact of all these little children will render it unlikely that even in years to come your sister should be able to make an advantageous second marriage."

As Amelia pondered sadly and silently over the contents of the letter, she thought to herself, "Do I not now see what is the will of God?" One of the earliest and best beloved of her pupils *had now* become her principal teacher, and *had*

been for some years past on somewhat undefined terms of intimacy with a young professor, a man of great talent, but poor. She resolved at once to relinquish to her young friends her now flourishing establishment, demanding of them no other security of payment than that which was afforded by her own knowledge of their ability and honesty. Giving up then, at once, the honourable and lucrative position which she had acquired for herself, Amelia tore herself away from her beloved pupils. The young maidens, decked with garlands, and singing plaintive songs, amid many tears, escorted her to the shore whence she embarked for her native land. She came thither, not indeed as she once had in former years dreamed and fondly hoped to come, a happy bride, on whom, after long days of self-denial, the star of fortune had at length shone forth ; but with a subdued heart, as one who had fulfilled the lot which had been appointed for her. She entered her early home to meet no brilliant future ; she came to commence a life of much activity, of care and toil ; to the difficult labour of keeping the books and accounts of a large establishment ; to such employments only as were all contrary to her natural tastes, the whole course of her education, and all her former habits of life ; but she did not once shrink back, but took her duties in hand with a brave heart.

Louisa, under the care of her affectionate sister, soon recovered her health, and her lively, energetic nature was *not* quelled even by her sorrow for Ce

bon Charles. She conducted all the out-door concerns, looked after the workmen, and had all necessary interviews with men of business; while Amelia undertook the bookkeeping, the correspondence, and above all, the care of the children, to whom a whole world of love was opened in the sayings and doings of their dear, good aunt. In former times they were hurriedly dressed, and hastily fed; occasionally kissed, and then sent off, so as to give as little trouble as possible. They now found that there was one who took a lively interest in all their childish fancies, stories, and games; and who yet superintended all with that firm, judicious guidance which, though children cannot understand or appreciate it, wonderfully conduces to their comfort. It was not the work of a day to Amelia to settle down quietly into a pleasant and peaceful life. She had no longer that proud feeling of self-dependence, and of having obtained an honourable position by her own energy and talent. Though she was the very life and spirit of the house, yet her part in it was but that of a subordinate. Madame Louisa, though she could not compare with her sister in intellect, yet very well understood how to act the part of mistress of the house; but Amelia received these humiliating circumstances of her position as a just retribution for her former pride, and deemed it as one of God's richest blessings to her that she was not destined to live a life without love, and that the eyes of *these five* little ones looked up to her so trustingly and so joyfully.

It was one day when in the midst of this little troop that Amelia saw again for the first time the beloved one of her youth. She had devoted a fine summer evening to a walk in the woods with the children. She was sitting on a little spot of rising ground, under a fir-tree, while the little folks were going busily hither and thither, gathering moss, ivy, and flowers, with which she was making them some garlands.

"Me first, aunt."

"Oh, auntie, now make one for me. I only want a little one, but it must be very pretty," said one young voice after another.

In order to quiet the little ones she began singing a song, and the four children, for the youngest was not old enough for a wood walk, readily joined in the song, which they sang very sweetly. They never guessed that they had a listener, till, during a pause, a stately gentleman stepped out of the thicket.

"Louis—Louis!" cried Amelia, in the first moment of surprise. He made a low bow and attempted to go on, but he could not, and remained standing there. The garland fell out of her hands as he approached nearer, and she stood up.

"Amelia!" said he at length, offering her his hand, in which she willingly placed her own. "How has it fared with you?" he asked, after a long pause.

"Very well, *my dear friend*," she said, in a low voice, for it was not possible for her to preserve a

cold demeanour. "And tell me about yourself, Louis," she said, with kind cordiality, adding, timidly, "And have you forgiven me?"

And Louis in a moment forgot all conventional rules, and forgot the presence of uninvited listeners. There was Amelia, in her gray dress, leaning against the fir-tree, the beloved of his youth, no longer young and blooming, but yet charming in all the grace of pure womanhood and a warm and earnest heart. They talked together for a long, long time, but not in the passionate excitement of their young days. Love, even the true, warm, pure love between man and woman, yet is not what poets and novelists have for centuries past proclaimed as gospel—a perpetual fire, which, though it be suppressed, yet blazes on in unabated ardour, and bursts out again after long years, unchanged, unimpaired, destroying where it cannot warm. The love of the young may rather be compared to the fireworks which for one moment blaze forth so brilliantly and wondrously, making all the land around a scene of magic splendour. Let them be extinguished, and darkness is all about us, yet mountain and valley and blossoms are all nevertheless unchanged. The night passes on, the magic gleam returns not, but the clear, cool, soft morning dawns again, and earth is beauteous still. When such young love is destined to brighten a heart and home, it burns as a cheerful light; but even then it does not glow of itself, it needs to be cherished and purified. It becomes

choked if not visited by the breath of Heaven, and is destroyed if not guarded with care. But on the other hand, this same flame can distribute and spread itself like the salutary heat of some warm spring, which is rich in blessing to so many.

Amelia's love was no longer a scorching flame. From the hour on which she knew that Louis was the husband of another, she had learnt, by God's help, to lay her heart to rest.

Louis had now, for his own wife, a kind-hearted, cheerful woman, who had made life again dear to him. He had in all these years thought much less of Amelia than she of him, and yet this meeting might perhaps have proved more dangerous to his happiness than to hers, had not her repose and frankness acted soothingly on his agitated feelings. So they spoke as old friends should do, calmly and cordially, together, of bygone days, and once more Amelia begged his forgiveness for all the suffering which her false idea of magnanimity had caused him—and thus they parted in peace.

Whether all hidden grief was silenced for ever in Amelia's breast—that is the secret of a woman's heart. But she walked forth cheerfully on her way; her heart—her own proud heart—had chosen her path, but the Lord had so guided her onwards as to turn it into a way of blessing for herself and for others. "A man's heart deviseth his way," saith Solomon, "but the Lord directeth his steps."

III.

Herr Wezler and his Wife.

"Blessing she is—God made her so—
 And deeds of week-day holiness
 Fall from her noiseless as the snow,
 Nor hath she ever chanced to know
 That aught were easier than to bless.

"She doeth little kindnesses
 Which most leave undone or despise ;
 For naught that sets one heart at ease,
 Or giveth happiness or peace,
 Is low-esteemed in her eyes."—LOWELL.

HERR WEZLER, common-councilman and fire-insurance agent in a country town, must surely have been the most cautious man in the whole world. The renowned watch of the Rev. Herr Hahn, the hand of which was said to indicate all the chief events to the end of time, might seem to have been constructed especially to aid him in making his calculations. It was a pity that he never possessed it. He wandered continually, lost in meditation, with his spectacles pushed up, his forehead wrinkled with thought, and his hands behind him full of newspapers, between the barometer and the thermometer. The weight of his dressing-gown almost drew him to the ground, for he had prudently had it made out of the thickest cloth that he could procure; and it was lined, so that when at length the

cloth wore into holes, and the blue checked flannel came to daylight, he pointed out to his wife the wisdom with which he must have planned his gown. Indeed, his hats and coats went twice out of fashion, and twice came in again, having been made of almost immortal, waterproof, airproof, and dustproof materials.

His house, and every one of its offices, down to the pigsty, was furnished with lightning-conductors, and it was really surprising that he did not, like the Prince of Neuwied in the old story, wear a lightning-conductor on his hat. Besides this, he was a shareholder in all fire, storm, and life insurance companies, and endeavoured heartily to get up an insurance company against the damages of inundations, just because his little meadow near the brook on one occasion had, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the place, been overflowed with water. Of course he took shares in all the other societies which sprang up, offering promises of compensation for all sorts of future ills; and indeed he had, in the course of his life, been the originator of several of these very prudent companies. The newspaper of the town was often enriched by articles of his, appealing to the public spirit of his fellow-townsmen. Even as early in the year as the month of February he once issued a notice: "All whose gardens seem likely to be overrun with caterpillars are invited to confer on the subject." In March he warned the citizens of his native town that the precious harvest of

autumn was likely to become a prey to mice, and urged them to place poison and set up mouse-traps in order to destroy whole generations of mice before they were yet born. In a word, his daily life was a series of anxious and precautionary measures from all imaginable and unimaginable evils that could by any possibility come to pass.

His wife, on the contrary, looked the very picture of repose. You seldom saw her but she was beside her on the table or window-seat a basketful of stockings which needed repair, and this basket seemed always to fill itself, though it was empty almost every day. In the evening she sat, by candlelight, at a work-table in the middle of the room, still intent upon stockings, though in the case they were new ones, which she was knitting from an immense ball of worsted. It would seem as if she, in one respect, resembled her husband, that she intended making a supply of stockings, not only for her own household, but for yet unborn generations for years to come.

Herr Wezler had not omitted any of his habitual precautions when selecting a wife. He considered it always desirable to have an eye to pecuniary circumstances in marriage, in order that a wife might never have to experience privations in her old age. He believed that he was acting very wisely too in choosing an orphan child, because, during the lifetime of parents, it is impossible to predict what amount of property may fall to a daughter.

Unfortunately, this notion of his misled him

for after his marriage he found that a worthless stepfather had contrived to spend the money which his wife ought to have inherited. In this point, therefore, his wise and prudent considerations had failed to be of service to him ; but on the other hand he had chosen his wife, like the Vicar of Wakefield, not for brilliant qualities, but for domestic virtues, and here he had made no mistake. At no period of her life had Frau Wezler been a beauty. A mischievous wit had said on the wedding-day that she was like a piece of cloth, one must turn it inside out to discover its good quality.

But this colourless complexion wore well, and as she never looked young, so she never seemed to grow old ; and twenty years after her marriage Frau Wezler was still sitting, the sweet, contented, placid woman, with what seemed to be the same brown dress, over the same basket of stockings, looking pretty much as she looked a week after she became a wife. She was neither witty nor fascinating ; had no silver-toned laughter, nor overflowing imaginativeness, so that she never made Herr Wezler's house a heaven, but only a good, comfortable home. Yet she spread around her so kindly an atmosphere, that not only grave women, but even merry girls enjoyed her society ; and many secrets kept most carefully from all others were confided to her, for everyone felt that she was ever to be relied on for secrecy and sympathy. The habit of repose, which indeed had grown upon her,

served in some sort as a counteraction to the restless anxiety for the future which was characteristic of her husband ; but it was certainly never the repose of idleness. She did many things quietly before Herr Wezler had even thought of ordering them ; for while he was thinking of the most remote future, she was giving her cares to what was to happen the next minute ; and it was to be attributed to her economy and good domestic arrangements alone that the good property which Herr Wezler had inherited from his father had not by degrees been swallowed up in his various speculations and schemes. She had a quiet and deeply religious spirit, and read little beyond her Bible ; yet her husband's anxieties often ended in a quiet laugh at himself, when she tranquillized him by her hearty and courageous faith, and when she said with so much simplicity, " Papa, leave a little of it to our good God."

Some persons might fancy from the everlasting basketful of stockings that Frau Wezler was not a thoroughly good housewife, for it is evident that good housekeeping has to do with many things besides stockings. In reply to this objection I must answer that during the early years of their married life, and while the good wife was hoping to have in some future day the aid of a little daughter, she often engaged a poor lame young girl who could sit in the back-parlour and make and repair linen for the occasion, a work which was rather difficult to Frau Wezler, as her eyesight was

not very good. Besides, she would be up betimes in the morning, and when her husband had lain down his weary anxious head at night, she was working away quietly at household duties which some women would have done amid the scolding and ordering of servants with considerable noise and bustle.

HERR WEZLER'S FIRST SON.

It was well for Herr Wezler that God did not see fit to bestow on him the blessing of a large family, for his anxiety about their prospects in life would inevitably have brought him to an early grave. Even with the two sons he had, it cost him a great amount of perplexity and many a sleepless night, while he framed vast projects for guarding his family against every misfortune which could possibly arise.

His first son was just a week old when he went to the mother, who lay languidly on her couch, yet, weak as she was, smiling very happily at her little son. His hands were both filled with prospectuses of various societies which he spread around the newborn infant. "I find some most practical and excellent companies," he began to say eagerly, "in which we can purchase a valuable annuity for our child, if we invest money immediately after his birth. Look here, now, my dear, which should you like best?" for though he knew he should get but little aid *from his wife* in his business plans,

yet he could not help talking to her about them, "Dear papa," she answered, "my head is too weak for all these calculations, but do you not think we should strive to bring our child into the way of insuring his eternal life before we concern ourselves with a life insurance for this world?" Herr Wezler, though he did not at once see that what his wife said related to the child's baptism, yet as the idea dawned upon him, felt much pleased with this view of hers, which seemed to place the holy duty in a new light before him. However, notwithstanding her remark, he invested a sum of money immediately as a preparatory step towards the child's annuity, although with all his reasonings he could not induce the directors of the company to agree to the various conditions which he wished to make for all sorts of possibilities.

And now comes the question, How was the child to be brought up? On this subject the happy father had had many theories, even before the little one had opened its eyes to the light, and these were now renewed with freshened energy, as the question of sex had at least decided itself. As the inclinations and tastes of the child seemed to develop themselves, so Herr Wezler from time to time altered his plans again and again. The boy's first and favourite plaything happened to be a stick, hence the papa began thinking that he might *probably* be destined to be a teacher of youth, and *made himself acquainted with the nature of all the professorships which he might possibly obtain*

in after-life, taking even now a systematic list of them. Soon after this the boy showed a very marked love of hewing and digging. This seemed to indicate that he ought to be a farmer, and Herr Wezler now walked about, silently meditating as to whether it would not be desirable to enlarge his few acres and gardens, so as to make a little country residence for his son's future possession. But when there succeeded to the love of digging, a great delight in living creeping things, such as beetles and snails, then the father thought it had become quite clear that his son would some day be a naturalist.

The mother had also her own quiet plans for her little Adolf, but she said nothing about them, because she had always observed in her own home that strange peculiarity, which indeed may be seen now and then, that the very best of husbands have a habit of objecting to a proposed plan, for the simple reason that their wives first suggested it. So she listened in silence to all his various projects.

When Adolf was four years of age his mother ventured one morning to take him to church, as she knew that her quiet little boy would not disturb others. The Sunday afternoon was always passed by Herr Wezler amid his family. Great was his surprise to see Adolf perched upon a high stool spreading out his hands, and proceeding in a pathetic manner to talk some childish nonsense.

"What, are you already making a beginning?" asked the delighted father.

"Yes, I am preaching," said the child, quite gravely.

"Now," said the father, "I have decidedly discovered the true bent of his mind. Do you hear, Jane?" he said to the smiling mamma; "now we really do know what we ought to make of him. It is true," he added, somewhat anxiously, "a clergyman's prospects are not much, for he may be thirty or thirty-five years old before he gets a parish."

"Yes," said his mother, "unless he should find a patron to give him a living."

"There you are right," exclaimed the father, "and for this purpose it would be very desirable that we should endeavour to form an intimacy with some persons of rank. He may become a tutor in some nobleman's family, travel with his pupil, and in the end be appointed to a church near his country seat. We must think this over in good time. I do recollect," he said, musingly, "that my good deceased father, the doctor, once set the broken leg of a very distinguished traveller; but then, to be sure, that was a great while ago. Well, we must look about us for some one else."

This period of Herr Wezler's life was a peculiarly contented and happy one, for he could go on day by day forming his projects with some definite aim. All the playthings, games, and even the dress of the little boy bore some reference to his reverend calling. Drums and trumpets, whips and sabres, were banished from the nursery; and when, after some consideration, a rocking-horse was admitted,

it was allowed because, as his father remarked, the knowing how to ride well might some day be useful to Adolf if he should ever become the clergyman of a country parish. So full of his plans was Herr Wezler, that even when the pigs were slaughtering for family use, the skins were carefully taken off and tanned, that they might one day serve as bindings for the books of the student.

PROSPECTS OF A LIVING.

A year after the important decision as to the career of the first son, there lay in the cradle a second boy, William, who for some time afforded no indication of his future faculties, unless indeed they might be those of a town-crier. Thus Herr Wezler's hopes and plans seemed to have come to a stand-still. In consequence of some military movements which were occurring about that time, a large number of troops came into the little town where the family resided. He only who has witnessed such an event can know what a tumult a number of soldiers cause in a peaceable little place where until then the appearance of a single soldier, with his musket, would set all the schoolboys running after him. For a week before the expected arrival there is a general cleaning, preparation of rooms, cooking, *baking, smoking, and salting*, as if *every individual housewife* had to maintain the *whole regiment*. And when they really enter the

town—these valiant heroes—what curiosity arises as to who will be quartered at each house ! What a marvel it is, too, that a warrior eats, and drinks, and behaves just like other people ! And then, besides the clattering life with which the streets are full, how important an event for the servants is even the simple fetching in of the water, when the wells and pumps are surrounded by the young sons of Mars ! The sentinels, the patrols, the grand bands of music in front of the houses occupied by the general officers—all this is a kind of enchantment even before the coming of that eventful day of marching into battle, when the warriors go forth with flying colours, destined to conquer or to die. And then, what an amount of lively conversation is furnished for morning calls and coffee-parties, where every wife boasts to her neighbour that she has had the soldier of highest rank or of most renowned valour quartered in her house !

In addition to all this, it was after a long period of entire peace that the little town was now visited by the military. Herr Wezler was especially fond of the army, this being an institution which bore continual testimony to the need of providing for the future, and he warmly invited the soldiers into his house. As a reward for his willingness to give help, two private soldiers and a lieutenant were sent to stay with him ; and the last-named was not simply a gentleman, but a real count—the Count of Schreckenhorst.

This was a highly important matter. On the

day on which the soldiers came, Herr Wezler went himself to examine the room kept for company, to see if it was suitably furnished. He covered the old boot-jack with brown glazed paper, that it might look as if highly polished; and when his wife regretted that she had not a light counterpane, but only the down-beds usually used as coverlids, he actually robbed his cholera store-room, where, ever since the year 1836, mint, pepper, and camomile flowers had been piled up in all sorts of preparations, amid warming-pans and pieces of flannel, destined to be an armoury against the invasion of the then threatening enemy. From this hoard he produced the very finest piece of flannel, to be made into a new and light counterpane. He had long been accustomed to purchase at auctions, as a store for future need, all sorts of articles which might prove useful in any imaginable emergency, and thus he was enabled to complete to his satisfaction the furniture of the spare bed-room. He placed there, both as a symbol of war and a mark of confidence, all sorts of weapons with which he had provided himself in case of the intrusion of robbers; and an old sword, two pistols which would not go off, and a drum which might serve to alarm the neighbourhood in case of a fire, were piled up as a little trophy. Among many useful and necessary things which had belonged to his deceased father were a *lancet*, a pair of nail-scissors, and a *measuring-rod*, and these were added to the furniture of the room, though I do not believe that

Herr Wezler had a very clear idea of the exact uses of any one of these implements.

The young count came, and with many polite expressions of gratitude took possession of his well-furnished apartment. He was very amiable, and entertained the master of the house in the best possible way by listening to his explanations of all the things which might possibly happen in the political world, if certain unlikely events should ever come to pass; and then our count said "Yes," or "Indeed," or "Certainly," at the right time. To mamma he told, unasked, a great many love-adventures and wonderful accounts of feats of horsemanship, which were going on in garrison towns; he would draw soldiers on a slate for little Adolf; and, in a word, he turned out to be a most delightful man. Even during their first dinner papa gathered from his conversation that the count was the next heir of an estate which had the patronage of two livings in the church. Here was a welcome event! The excited father began at once to explain to the count his plans for the future career of Adolf, and set forth all the good qualities which the boy would be likely to possess, all the various branches of learning which he was destined to acquire, and then asked him if it was likely he could make up his mind to have him as a tutor to his sons if ever he should have any. The count, *laughing heartily*, acceded to this proposal; planned *with Herr Wezler* the route by which the young *man would have to travel, something in the manner*

of the celebrated Hieronymus Jobs, and drank in punch the health of the future tutor and his pupils.

"There again is a great portion of the future looked after," said the father at night to his wearied wife, as they were going to bed. "Now it is time to think of William ; I regard Adolf as quite provided for. I hope the count may not have any daughters, that our boy may not get into any absurd difficulties on their account."

Mamma heard all these plans with her own peculiar pensive smile, but before going to sleep she uttered with especial devotion the words of the Lord's Prayer, "That Thy will may be done on earth as it is in heaven."

For some time after this visit of the young lieutenant the little Adolf would play at nothing but soldiers, and this taste of his somewhat troubled his father, till the mother told the boy various narratives of the field-preaching of the chaplains. The child readily seized on the idea, and began addressing very animating sermons to the army, which once more relieved the papa's mind.

Indeed, after all, there were several little things which yet required much consideration and careful planning. For instance, the count had remarked that the country seat to which the best living was attached suffered sadly for want of water ; but Herr Wezler was on intimate terms with the Government Inspector of *Aqueducts and Wells*, and he *valued to keep up the acquaintance by occasion- sending a ham ; so that, when the proper time*

came, this officer's heart might be softened to his appeal, and he might do something towards digging an artesian well on the count's estate.

"There will be many a little matter to see after here and there," he said in a conciliatory manner to his wife; "but in the main point we may consider Adolf as quite provided for."

WILLIAM'S DESTINATION.

Although Papa Wezler busied himself most earnestly with speculations as to William's future destiny, yet nothing seemed to occur which could enable him to judge for what calling he was naturally suited. It might be that he was destined to become a philosopher or democrat, for he evidently knew very well how to destroy, and overthrow, and break down; and he showed very fine talents in a way really quite beyond his age for building barricades, without the smallest instruction, with footstools or pieces of wood, and especially with books. But as this is not a very useful profession Herr Wezler could not come to any conclusion on the subject, and he said sometimes that he did not wish to hasten matters, but still such a long period of suspense was very painful.

At length William was left simply with nothing before him but the immediate duty of learning his A B C, till it was observed, even in his earliest

school-days, that he showed some talent for arithmetic, which gave great relief to Herr Wezler's anxiety. William was destined by natural aptitude for a merchant, that was now plain enough. So his father went on that very day and forthwith bought at the sale of an old schoolmaster's property an old compass, remarking that if his son became a merchant he would doubtless have to make many voyages over the seas. During the whole of that evening he talked over with his wife, who in her usual kindly way sat listening in silence, the plans for William's future lot. "Then," he added, "it will be well too for our good Adolf to have a brother who is a merchant: parsons are very unpractical men, ignorant of the world, and are often cheated; and then this little fellow here can keep his eyes open on his brother's affairs, and make all his purchases for him. And then again it will be a good thing for such a reckless young fellow as a mercantile traveller that a grave, religious brother should say to him sometimes, 'Let us not forget God's word.' Yes, it is an excellent arrangement."

"And yet there are a good many things to be considered too," began the papa again; "for our means are not sufficient to provide our son with a business of his own, so that we must seriously think of looking out a wife for him with some property; do you hear, my dear?"

"Yes indeed," answered mamma; "but I doubt if she is yet born."

All farther cares and plans for the future seemed now for a time to be spared to Herr Wezler. Adolf and William seemed likely to be the only descendants of his respectable family, and to his great joy the natural inclinations of the two little boys seemed to point in the very direction of their father's plans for them, a circumstance which was doubtless to be attributed in some measure to the quiet guidance of their good mother. Adolf was a grave, diligent boy, who always added so many distichs to his Latin argument that his master was obliged to confine him to a certain number; and he could narrate so cleverly and readily the stories connected with the beautiful pictures in the illustrated Bible which his father had bought for him, that the delighted father assured his friend and neighbour, Herr Butzengeiger, that the boy was already fit to enter the pulpit.

The first Christmas present which was given to William when once his vocation had been decided upon was a little shop. Having immediately eaten, in a sadly uncommercial spirit, all the sugar-almonds and raisins of the shop, he began a very systematic business with coffee, beans, rice, and sand, while his father sat watching his proceedings with much satisfaction. However strictly upright and honourable he was in his own conduct, yet he could not help smiling delightedly when Adolf accused his brother of having defrauded him in the sale of some Christmas cake, and of having persuaded him to take an old dry cracknel in

HERR WEZLER AND HIS WIFE.

exchange for a gingerbread nut. "He is overreaching our old Adolf," he exclaimed. "Yes, indeed he will want well looking after."

FURTHER PROSPECTS.

A short time after this most promising Christmas day Herr Wezler was obliged to undertake a journey which was very disagreeable to him. A cousin of his wife's, a merchant, had gone off to America to escape from his creditors, and Herr Wezler being the most respectable member of the family, and the nearest relative to the merchant's only child, was called upon to arrange the complicated business. He departed in very ill-humour, for in spite of his restless anxieties, he liked outward repose, and he foresaw that the present affair was a very unpleasant one, and that there would be little provision for the child of his cousin.

"The best thing to be done with the child," he said to his wife, "will be to let her board with me honest, respectable dressmaker, who will take her at small expense, and bring her up to help her business; though I very much doubt if that my father will ever let her follow him, yet possible he may do so, and dressmaking would be more profitable in America than here."

"Certainly," said his wife; "and perhaps, till you can find just such a person, you had better take the little girl to our house."

"Yes, yes," said the husband ; "she can come here for a few weeks, but not longer. It would not be good for her, considering her future position, and it would be better from the very first to keep the child in her proper place."

The mamma heard all this in silence, for her heart was full of a motherly yearning towards the poor forsaken little girl. But she did not choose to argue the point, and she consoled herself by thinking over one of those little sentences which she stored in her memory for every occasion in life :—

"Though to-day it goes not as one will,
Yet let us bide a short while still ;
A morrow will come when to-night is past,
And what we long for may bring at last."

In the course of a few days Papa Wezler came back, looking very placid and cheerful, and accompanied by a little neglected-looking, blue-eyed girl, with an equally shabby little doll in her arms. Nine women out of ten would have been burning with curiosity to know why he returned looking so happy from this vexatious affair. Not so Mamma Wezler. The boys stood by the carriage welcoming their father loudly, and leaving the little girl within, after having stared at her till their mamma proceeded at once to load them both with some of the luggage. The child's small parcel was *easy enough* to carry, but Herr Wezler had prepared *himself* for the chances of travelling by providing *for his* journey of six hours as if he had set forth

expedition to the North Pole. At last all
ken out, and the papa himself came forth,
ed the pocket of the carriage, spoke to the
t about the management of the hungry
, and walked upstairs amid the group of his
y-laden family, carrying in his own hands
ttle of cherry-brandy and the stone bottle of
which he had provided for the journey.

en once upstairs the father proceeded to
k some of the treasures which he had brought

Adolf would not have been much edified
Concordance which papa had saved for him
mass of waste paper that had been intended
ugar-bags, nor would William have been
ted with the pair of scales and the arith-
d table which he received as a present, if it
ot happened that papa had brought also
the sale at the house a large quantity of
candy as a store for future coughs. With
of this the boys went bustling off to their
oom, the mamma helped Herr Wezler to his
s and dressing-gown, handed him the barley-
which she had kept hot for him—for he did
se tea, and took the half-frozen and timid
to her bed, not forgetting to lay her doll
her. The child suffered her to do every-
for her, only looking at her wonderingly.
ow, Mary, let us say our prayers," said
na.

*y prayers!" said the astonished little girl;
ght only parsons said prayers."*

"Dear little innocent!" said the mamma, with tears in her eyes, as she bent over her and folded her hands together. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord bless thy going out and thy coming in, both now and for evermore," she said, devoutly, in a sweet, low voice. The little girl folded her hands too, and looked up into the mamma's kind, quiet eyes till she fell asleep, for never up to this hour had the poor child been tenderly spoken and sung to by anyone.

Meanwhile, Herr Wezler, having warmed and refreshed himself, called his boys into the parlour, and asked them about the occurrences and progress of the last few days before bidding them good night. And then he sat contentedly smoking his pipe beside mamma, who had established herself, in her usual quiet way, by the stocking-basket.

"Now, mamma, what do you think?" began Herr Wezler; "but you will never guess; I have looked out a wife for our William."

"A wife!" asked mamma, with undisguised astonishment; "what! for that little fellow!"

"Ay; why not?" he answered. "Things were very bad down there where I have been, but not quite so bad as might have been expected. There was money enough to pay all the creditors, but there is so little left for the child that it will scarcely furnish even a very small sum to pay for her board."

"The poor little thing seems sadly neglected," said the mamma.

“Yes, that she certainly is,” replied Herr Wezler, “but I will tell you about that by-and-by. Now, listen. When I inquired about her father’s affairs, I found out that a certain Frau Crabbe was the chief creditor. He owed large sums to her, and it was Frau Crabbe here, and Frau Crabbe there, and everywhere. Cousin Henry’s best friend told me all about it. ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘Herr Wezler, and Henry would have been here now if he had not lost his wife so early, and if that good-for-nothing old Frau Crabbe had never existed. When left a widower he was induced by his feeling of loneliness to go off to the hotels, while the poor little girl at home was half-starved, and that old Frau Crabbe worried him to the quick for every penny of her rent, and he kept borrowing more and more money at a higher and higher rate of interest, till he did not know how to help himself.’ Then I heard that this Frau Crabbe was an old, avaricious widow, who had inherited a good deal of money from her father, and who had still more enriched herself by marrying late in life a yet more wealthy wine-merchant. No one knows the amount of her property; she is said not even to know it herself, though she sits calculating her money day and night.”

“And what of all this?” asked Frau Wezler.

“What of this!” continued Herr Wezler, with breathless eagerness; “can’t you guess even now? Well, this Frau Crabbe has an only child, a little girl two years old, just suitable for our William.

The child lives, they say, in complete wretchedness: this dragon of a woman scarcely allows food to herself or her daughter. When she has grown up and her mother about as amiable to her as ever, we will send William as an apprentice to M——, where she resides. Such a young man as he seems likely to turn out is sure to please that Fraulein Crabbe, who will have grown up under such miserable circumstances. Of course it will be gall and bitterness to the mother, for she will be forced to give up all the money left by the father. I took an opportunity of speaking to the lawyer who made her husband's will. I scarcely think we should get the mother's consent; but no matter, in such cases the will stands in place of the parent's agreement. We should send the badly-educated girl into a seminary, or what-do-you-call-it, where she will get polished, and then William might really establish the first business in the country."

"Perhaps he might, papa," said Frau Wezler, with great seriousness, "but don't be tempted. What blessing could rest on such money?"

"Well, my dear, then we may as well burn or throw into the river all the money which wicked people leave behind them. Our William would pretty soon circulate it, and get rid of the curse."

"And what sort of a girl can she grow up?" asked Frau Wezler. "Well, now, it's just that sort of thing which often makes the best people; covetous parents seldom have covetous children. But

then," added mamma, "she will be a bad housewife."

"Now, just look here, my dear," replied the father, "I have attended to that. I confess there can be nothing at Frau Crabbe's but the worst of management, so that it may be difficult enough for the young girl to learn anything about house-keeping, even if you could manage to bring her here for a year or two into training beforehand. That's why I have now brought home little Mary with me. You can certainly make a good little housewife of her, and she may then some day step in and manage the house for the young mistress; and by this means, too, the child will be saved from being thrown among strangers."

"Yes, yes, I will do my best by her," said the wife, cheerfully, and she could not help smiling at herself to think that she got so angry about a wife for her son, who lay at this very moment in bed with Adolf, quarrelling with him about a broken tin soldier.

THE LITTLE HOUSEKEEPER.

It all seemed coming to pass, however, according to Herr Wezler's wish. Little Mary, who quite revived under mamma's protection, seemed really very likely, in course of time, to become an active, *intelligent little housekeeper*. No daughter of her ~~was~~ *could have clung more warmly to the mamma,*

nor listened more lovingly to her every word, than did this long-neglected child. She ran about after her like a little dog, carrying the key-basket, or garden tools, or she handed the clothes-pegs when mamma hung out the clothes to dry, and performed a hundred little services of the kind. She did not make any brilliant progress at school, but one might very soon see the helpfulness of the busy little hands when at home. She had not much intercourse with the boys. Adolf was soon sent to school, and William was out-and-out a wild school boy, and would have been ashamed to associate with a little girl. Now and then she was admitted to the honour of being his horse, and allowed to run about before him with a bridle in her mouth, but it was only just in the family circle, and such rude games were not approved by papa. She sometimes gained privately a great deal of credit to herself too by putting William's little shop to rights; for that young tradesman often left it in such disorder as gave no bright promise for his future activity and care in business.

Herr Wezler was so much occupied in caring for the future welfare of his family that the present was left pretty much to mamma, and under her quiet guidance the childhood and youth of her sons passed on in a very comfortable fashion. The only difficulty was the boys' clothing, for by Herr Wezler's order jackets and trowsers were always made with reference to the future, and were in consequence so wide and long that the lads seem

almost lost in them. It cost Adolf many tears of stifled anger, and William many a sanguinary fight, when their schoolfellows called after them, "Wezler, wont you take a lodger in your jacket?" but even these troubles were generally soothed by mamma.

A HITCH IN THE RECKONING.

Twelve years had glided on since that evening on which Herr Wezler had brought home the little foster-daughter, and with her the brilliant prospects of the future for his William. Adolf had not quite answered his father's expectations. He had indeed remained true to his calling of a clergyman, and had the character of being a diligent student; but his quiet, brooding disposition did not quite please papa. A very good understanding existed between mother and son. Little as she could comprehend the struggles, conflicts, and doubts through which his young spirit was passing, yet she encouraged him by her loving eyes, her kind words, and by the wise proverbs and verses which she had always at hand for such occasions, and with which she had given him many a help during his highly philosophical education.

Of course Herr Wezler still remembered the count and the living in his gift; he had endeavoured, too, *from time to time*, to refresh his *memory after the good old custom*, by sending a *present to the noble lieutenant*, ingeniously

mingling up among various other pieces of intelligence sundry reports of his young tutor's progress. But he received rare and always very short answers to his letters.

When Adolf had completed his studies, Herr Wezler had ventured on a more decided inquiry as to how matters were in the nobleman's worthy family; but, alas! the count had replied that he was not yet married, and that "My lord," his father, was up to that time still in possession of his domain. Adolf was by no means grieved at this intelligence, for he had no desire to become a tutor, so he entered at once on a curacy which was offered to him. The disappointment to his plans had, however, quite perplexed Herr Wezler, and he felt unable to devise with any precision a new project as a substitute for that which had thus been frustrated. Yet, after all, he still held fast to the hope of the living, even though the tutorship might come to nothing.

Adolph had one day come home on a visit from his curacy, which was but a few miles off. Everything in his father's house seemed just as it ever had been; the sofa, the high-backed easy-chair, always hid beneath an upper covering of chintz, under which the truly handsome damask cover had, all unseen and unadmired, meanwhile grown torn and old,

"Like the tiny violet,
That still in secret blooms."

There sat his father by the window in his blue

occo lounging-chair, which had well deserved name it had long borne, of the Scheming Seat, where at that very moment he sat holding a spaper in his hand so thoughtfully that he otless must have been occupied with the future ome one or other. Mamma was sitting at the r window, quietly knitting from her large at her little table, as of old, the only change g that she now wore a pair of spectacles, while le her still sat Mary at her needlework. A : interruption to this quiet life was never un- ome, and the new-comer was joyfully received : the kind homely phrase, "God be with ." Mary, after a somewhat shy, sisterly greet- had made room for him by his mother, and the cheerful hospitable sound of the coffee- was to be heard in the house, a sound which fairly rival the far-famed poesy of the song he tea-kettle. There is little to be said about y, and indeed, usually very little was said t her. She was not tall, and not short; not , and not handsome; a pair of clear blue eyes had, which you liked to look into, if they lentally met yours; and a gentle mouth which ed formed for silence rather than for much ng. A right good little housekeeper she had me, and the mamma, who had never been vigorous in such matters, had now quite for- en them, *and had long since given over her and account-book into Mary's hands.* Nor *Mary a silent and lonely sufferer, but a good,*

glad-hearted girl, always contented if people were but contented with her. Well versed in books she certainly was not, and she had even no album but from the writings and biographies of great men, which Adolf sent from time to time to her mother, and which she had read aloud to her. She was at least quite at home in some distant corners of the inner and outer world, and this gave her a certain kind of quiet confidence. She had the diligent hand, and the frugal mind ; she stored up collections of all sorts of things, such as were never shown in cabinets ; bits of silk and thread, laces and twine, remnants of ribbon, pieces of calico and linen. Whoever was in want of any thing of the sort was sure to go to her for it, and papa observed with extreme pleasure the useful qualities which he considered so fitted her for her special destination. Though she greatly respected Adolf, yet he had ever remained rather distant towards her ; but with William, who had now just completed his apprenticeship in a town at some distance, and whom she seldom saw, she had advanced from the post of a horse almost to that of a sister. She had, from papa's conversation, pretty well guessed, by degrees, his future schemes for William, and her own share in them. On this account she felt especially interested in him, and seemed already bound to take care of him.

The coffee had been drunk, papa had fetched his neighbour, Herr Butzengeiger, for his regular evening walk, Mary remembered that she had

gather beans in the garden, and mother and son were left alone. From the very moment in which Adolf entered the house, the mother had felt assured that he had something important on his mind. Yes, he had indeed. He, too, had made a plan for the future, one to which his soul, weary with its conflicts, clung as to a rock in a raging sea. He wished to be a missionary, and had come to this decision after so many inward struggles that he now stood immovably fixed. This was a hard blow to the good mother. Her thoughts had, indeed, ever followed at a distance the ambassadors of the gospel with admiration and sympathy; but that she should heartily yield up her own child, her darling son! She had never thought on this as a possibility. But the hand that beckons us to a great self-sacrifice always holds out at the same time a powerful staff, did we but know how to grasp it. As soon as she perceived that this was a duty to which her son felt moved by an inward feeling of necessity, she plucked up her courage, like that mother of the Maccabees in olden time. Her next thought was of the father. "I will tell you what you must do, Adolf," she said; "you must write to your father about it, and leave the letter here; he will bear it better so." This, too, the son thought would be for the best, and now the mother and son sat long together in silence, in one of those elevated moods which occur but rarely in life, when the inner world asserts its right, and when, without words,

each understands the other, as if heart lay open to heart; moods which belong not to young heart alone.

The father did not so readily enter into the proposal as the mother had done; where she, with more faithful and brave heart brought a free-will offering, he, after all, assented simply because he did not know what else he could do. A circumstance which so completely upset his projects which lay so entirely beyond all reasonable calculations, well-nigh confounded him, and he went about for some time like one in a dream. Not till he had given orders that henceforth cotton shirts should be made instead of linen, as better suited to a hot climate, nor till he had begun to purchase things at auctions and elsewhere, and to buy up a store of little bells and glass beads, because as savages were fond of them, Adolf might some day under William's guidance, open a new and profitable branch of trade, not till then did he gradually become reconciled to the plan. The mother looked on all this with emotion, for she saw that he still bore Adolf in his heart as a son and she did not fail daily to acknowledge and commend all these proofs of his fatherly kindness.

NEW HOPE AGAIN.

And now that William's years of apprenticeship had ended, it was thought that he must yet go

Italian Switzerland, in order to complete his training, before he could look for further advancement. Mary stitched away day and night, in order that she might fit him out properly for distant parts, and marked whole mountains of socks, which the mother brought out from her store-closet. Herr Wezler from this time directed all his energies towards providing for the future of his favourite son. The proposed mother-in-law, Frau Crabbe, had, up to this day, remained quite inaccessible to all attempts at closer intimacy. He had sought this by special letters, by purchase of wine—in short, by all kinds of expedients; but the old woman grew even more sullen and repulsive, and though her mental eye was not keen enough to detect Herr Wezler's real object, as she knew neither him nor his family, yet she was sharp enough to feel aware that he was not the man with whom she could do much business. Moreover, her avarice was assuming the old narrow views, like those of the miser in the A B C book; so she gathered her business into a small compass, and chiefly contented herself with collecting her rents. Nothing could be heard about the young daughter, except that she was an unruly little creature, and that her mother sent her to the cheapest school, and often for months together to none at all. Herr Wezler could never once get sight of her.

Feeling some uncertainty as to the success of his plan, Herr Wezler had endeavoured to place his

son in a mercantile house in which there was an only daughter, or better still, an heiress ! That could not, however, be managed ; but he, after much inquiry, heard of a house in which there were only two sons and a daughter, and even she, alas ! thought proper to marry before the period of William's apprenticeship had expired. William was in fact an excellent youth, and did not look at all as if his father would be obliged to snatch a wife for him out of the dragon's teeth.* Shapely and strong, blooming and bright-eyed, he looked forward to his business, as well as to life itself, with such lively confidence as only a sound young heart can do. He was quite aware of his father's far-seeing plans, but he felt no anxiety about the Crabbe project, nor could he possibly have taken any part in it. Many a time he brought life and pleasure into his father's quiet home by his thousand merry frolics. He raised ingenious towers with the venerable articles of furniture, and on these he performed gymnastic exercises ; he whistled waltz tunes to Mary while she sewed, so as to bring harmony even into his shirts. He smoked cigars out of the window, dressed himself in his mother's best company cap, and wrote a book for Adolf, who was now at the Missionary Institution, and advised him to present this pamphlet to the Cannibals. Mary used often to say that she could not do a stitch more for laughing, and papa declared every

* This refers to a popular German tale called "The Woodcut of Master Fox," given in Bulwer's *Pilgrims of the Rhine*.

day that there must be an end to this mischief, and the boy must go out of the house ; yet he asked after him if he was absent even for a quarter of an hour.

Just before the time had arrived when William was to set off on his travels, the mortgagee who held the only little property that had been saved for Mary called to make the small regular payment of interest which was now due. Herr Wezler was closeted with him in his room for a longer time than usual, and when he came back they all observed that he was taking great pains to bring his face into a grave and almost sorrowful expression, but that his efforts were vain.

"That man has just told me a singular piece of news," he began.

"What is it?" asked the mamma.

"Only think! Old Frau Crabbe has broken her neck!"

"My mother-in-law that was to be!" exclaimed William. He felt the greatest inclination to laugh, but checked himself as he saw the altered look of mamma's face, who folded her hands, and in a low voice uttered the prayer—

"From unprepared and sudden death deliver us, good Lord!"

"Indeed," she added ; "but how did it happen?"

"Well," said papa, "a short time since, at an auction, a little estate was knocked down to her, for which she afterwards had an agent. She suspected that this man had stolen some of her

straw, and laid it away in a barn. As she would not believe his assurances, the old woman herself scrambled to the top loft to look after it. She has long been feeble, chiefly from having begrudged herself proper food ; and so when she wanted to come down again—I do not know exactly how it happened——Well, short and sweet, she's dead.'

"God have mercy on her," sighed the mother.

"Yes, certainly that will be needful," said the papa, in a business-like tone. "Now, however apart from our own feelings, it is our sacred duty to adopt the neglected orphan."

"But father, pray consider," said Frau Wezler.

"But mother, only listen," answered her husband ; "if this is not an intimation of Providence then there is no such thing in this world. Only yesterday afternoon I was thinking how we were now sending forth William out into the world without any kind of certainty about his future life and prospects, and precisely at half-past ten yesterday Frau Crabbe broke her neck. You see it would be in every way a benefit to her child that a Christian man should take an interest in her."

William sketched meanwhile on Mary's work box a little picture for her, representing himself delicately holding with the scissors a great crab in full trim, and wrote under it, "In memoriam," adding also a motto which he had seen on his mother's glass needle-case—

"Wooing with neither joy nor mirth
To me's just hasty-pudding's worth."

THE YOUNG HEIRESS.

In spite of the unexpected death of the future mother-in-law, William was obliged to set forth on his journey, nor did any affectionate interest in the young heiress seem to urge him to linger. The papa, however, on the day of Frau Crabbe's funeral, went off to the place of mourning, notwithstanding all mamma's shakes of the head. Herr Wezler had learned something of diplomacy by these successive schemes of his. He gave himself out as a friend of the deceased Frau Crabbe, who had felt much interest in the unfortunate widow and her surviving child, and so he got into the house, and had a sight of the young orphan. This certainly was not very promising. She was a shy, unhealthy-looking thin girl of fourteen, with rough black hair, and who, dressed in her new and respectable mourning, seemed to feel herself very uncomfortable among so many people. Herr Wezler endeavoured to get near her. "How has the poor child borne the blow?" he inquired of a lady neighbour who did the honours of the table.

"She has troubled herself very little about it," she replied; "her first words were, 'Now then I shall get enough to eat.'"

She had also directly any money had come into her hands sent *and bought six buns, and eaten them all. Even while they were speaking the orphan had gone into the next room, and sat down,*

for the second time to the remains of a dish of roast veal.

"Poor child, nature will assert her rights," sighed Herr Wezler ; "that will soon cure itself."

As Frau Crabbe had left no will, a distant relative of the maiden's father, a respectable tradesman at the capital, was deputed guardian and trustee of what was really, in her position of life, an immense fortune. Herr Wezler represented himself to the guardian, though with some little hesitation, as an old friend of his deceased family connexion, and mentioned incidentally that his wife had always interested herself greatly about the little daughter, and would most willingly take her under her protection. The kinsman cut the matter short by remarking that fifty-four friends of the deceased mother had already offered themselves for this service of love ; that now, however, it was decided to entrust the child, who had been most sadly neglected, for one year to the family of a worthy country schoolmaster, in order to remedy, in some measure, the defects of her education ; and that he should afterwards take her home to his house, where, amid the circle of his five daughters, and among the great advantages of the capital, she would find every opportunity of finishing her education.

Nothing more could be done, yet it was some consolation to Herr Wezler's mind to ascertain that the five daughters had at least no brother ; and he set off after having made another attempt to inv

the heiress to his house for a few weeks' visit into the country, at which she stared at him quite abashed, but without answering. His hopes revived, however, on his road homewards, and he assured the mamma at home that the maiden was really not so very bad, considering all circumstances, and he shortly began talking over the future prospects of their daughter-in-law to be, and to congratulate himself on the lucky fact that the schoolmaster's family resided only about four miles off—to all which Mary was a keen though quiet listener.

A NEW FRIENDSHIP.

Five years had passed, and brought scarcely any change over Papa Wezler's household. Adolf was far, far over the sea, and the mother's eyes had grown much dimmer since the day of his departure. But they brightened again whenever she saw the postman, after a confidential nod of the head, step into the house, for then she knew that he brought news from afar. The papa had long since become reconciled to Adolf's calling, and often wrote long letters to him, full of all sorts of advice as to how he might civilize the savages, and by means of profitable traffic with them lay by something for the future. Already he pictured him in imagination a sort of *Christian Cacique*, ruling over a well-disposed and wealthy race, and thought over in what way the little chest of gold which Adolf

would some day, in all probability, send home, could be disposed of to the greatest advantage. The mother's thoughts did not travel so far forward. She found her refreshment in the strength and peace which spoke out of her son's letters, and she had but the one gentle wish to see him once more ere she died.

Papa meanwhile had not lost sight of Fraulein Crabbe. During her residence in the family of the schoolmaster he had made several attempts at a closer intimacy, but he had always found her almost as impracticable as aforetime her lady-mother had been. Those who had charge of her said, however, that she was a good kind of girl, who learnt her lessons regularly, and felt especial pleasure in having money that she might, when she had bought plenty of things to eat, deal it out with free hand to others; but that she was very shy to strangers.

On one occasion when Herr Wezler was trying to become more intimate with her, and had prepared himself with a pretty china cup as a gift with which to win her favour, he heard her say, from the top of the stairs, when the schoolmistress called her down, "Yes, I'll come when that old fellow is gone." This provoked the visitor to such a degree, that he gave up out of hand all further attempts at friendship, and comforted himself with the thought that when that handsome lad William once came forward, she would be ready enough to look at him. The mother understood this unsuc-

cessful expedition to a nicety, although the papa had made a firm resolution to say nothing about it, and Mary understood it too. But what has possessed this quiet maiden of late that she also on her part makes projects, and follows diplomatic aims? How has it come to pass that she, who never before would scarcely stir from the mother's side, even into the garden or the fields close by, now makes long journeys, from which she never comes back till evening? What has happened that she has become as much at home in the school-house at Bernheim as if she was one of their own children, and sits working by the round slatable beside the lady schoolmistress, as if she had sat there from childhood? How has it all been brought about; that that little wild girl Katherine Crabbe has grown confidential with her as she never was with anyone else before? This no one could explain; but so it was. There sat the two maidens in the broad window-seat in the old schoolroom, from which they could look far away down the blooming valley, and Katherine was gazing with her coal-black, piercing eyes into the soft blue orbs of Mary, and pouring out to her in rough, passionate words most bitter laments over the wretched, joyless childhood which she had passed with her mother; and Mary, with her soft, gentle voice, was telling her how she never saw *her* mother; *how her father* went far away, in *want and misery*, over the sea, and nobody has *ever since* heard of him; and yet how that, for all

this, life has gone well with her, and she had grown up in a happy home. "And only try and do right," she said, "and so it will turn out right well with you, and you will forget all—all that has been so sad."

"But you are poor, Mary, aren't you?" said Katherine; "I will give you money when I get it I have plenty now."

"Not to me; I have all I want," said Mary smiling sweetly; "but come now, I will show you who you shall give it to." So then they went off together to some of the poor cottages in the village and Mary did wonders with the substantial store of pocket-money which, by the guardian's authority was allowed to the heiress.

This new helpmate in teaching brought some little danger to the young assistant in the school the schoolmaster's son. He observed with undisguised admiration the calm influence exercised by this gentle, peaceful nature, and from Mary he first learned the right way of understanding and persuading this sadly-neglected young school-girl. Papa Wezler knew nothing of these doings; the mother kept silence respecting them, and let Mary do as she pleased. She had no intention of combating too eagerly the reluctance which Katherine evidently felt to come there on a visit. "What is to be will be sure to come right," she quietly *thought* to herself, and looked with moist eyes *after* the young maiden as she was carrying out *her* beautiful plan. This familiar intercourse

not, indeed, last very long. After a year's time the guardian fetched away Katherine to the capital, that she might there receive the final polish. There had been much gossip in the neighbourhood about Frau Crabbe, and her death, and the property she had left, from which rumour had made out that the child was a sort of female Kaspar Hauser, so that the guardian had thought it desirable to let a considerable time elapse before he placed the young girl amidst the circle of his five daughters.

Mary suggested to Katherine that they should write to each other, and a correspondence commenced, which, however, did not proceed very well, seeing that letter-writing was quite a new thing to the latter, and hence that it remained rather a one-side communication.

MEETING AGAIN.

Things were in this state on one summer day when festive preparations were going on actively in Herr Wezler's house. Rica, the maid, who had no other idea of a grand holiday than that of cleaning up everything, had already scoured the house from top to bottom, and now, for want of something else to do, was sweeping out the hen-house under the stairs. Mary was busy in throwing graceful wreaths of ivy over the snow-white curtains, thus completing the ornaments of the room already.

decked with garlands. Papa was polishing up most beautifully a little collection of coins which he had laid aside for William; and mamma arranged the coffee-cups round the exquisitely-made sponge-cake, William's favourite dish, and which, for the only time during many years past, she had once more prepared with her own hand.

William it was who, after five years' absence, was again expected in his father's house. He had been meanwhile a dweller, a volunteer, and a clerk in foreign countries, and now he wrote word that he would come home for a while, and seek a situation in the Fatherland. Papa, however, said to himself that he knew better what would happen now. The coffee stood ready, the rooms were decked, papa and mamma sat gazing out of the window, the knitting and mending-baskets actually put aside, till suddenly they heard the rattling of the wheels of a light carriage. "But that cannot be he—that tall, handsome man," said his mother to herself. Indeed it is he, and he springs out and shakes hands with papa, and kisses mamma, and then, for a change, kisses Mary, and shakes hands with Rica, who in one hand is holding a broom at arm's length; and he throws himself, finally, when the tumult of joy has a little abated, with a loud, hearty laugh, on the old patched sofa, with so violent a jerk that papa's newly-invented fly-trap, which lay upon it, snapped and burst into bits. *Yes, it is he—how healthy and fresh, how bright and unspoilt he looks!* They can none of them

take their eyes off him, till mamma reminds them of the coffee, and then they draw round the table and do full justice to the sponge-cake, and William looks at them all lovingly, and says, "Home is the best place, after all."

An hour or two after this arrival Adolf's letters were fetched and read through by them all together, and William helped to fill up the gaps in their geography, which had always been a puzzle to the parents; and then he too related well and fully the wonders of the glorious Alpine world, and the banks of the Lake of Geneva, and had comical tales to tell of the head of the firm, and his companions, and such thousands of things to say that papa had totally forgotten Fraulein Crabbe. Indeed, he never once remembered her, till at night, when he was just going to sleep, and he then laughed under the bed-quilt, saying to himself, "Well, Fraulein Crabbe, he's no old fellow, is he? He is one that even Rothschild's daughter would be only too glad to be selected for."

ANOTHER HITCH IN THE RECKONING.

Next day the heiress naturally became a topic of conversation. The papa laid before William, clearly and convincingly, the fact that he had had a wonderful piece of good luck, inasmuch as up to this time the rich heiress had not been snapped up and carried off from him; and told how that lately

at a committee meeting of the Storm-Insurance Company, he had contrived to become more intimately acquainted with her guardian, who complained of the anxiety and worry he had had with the self-willed maiden, and related how she scorned all wooers; so that he had resolved he would, if possible, make her take the very next who offered. The papa had forthwith mentioned his son William; and now that all this had been managed, William had nothing to do but to present himself, and bring the matter to a triumphant conclusion. "I have seen the girl, too," he added; "and you would not know her again. I can tell you that she looked quite elegant in her silk paletôt, or what-you-call-it. She's not exactly beautiful, but she's what one would call interesting, with coal-black eyes; and, William, I can tell you that if she has a penny she has 400,000 florins. You may rely upon that."

"If all this is to be said seriously," said William, "then I, too, must speak in earnest: I won't have the girl, not if she had four millions. I am young and healthy, have strength and ability, and good courage, and I trust in God to make my future way plain before me. And shall I sell myself, body and soul, for wretched gold—the gold of an old monster who drove Mary's father out into exile—for a rude, neglected creature, probably as bad as her mother?"

"No, that is not the case," interrupted Mary, *pale as death*, yet speaking with more firmness of

voice than they had ever heard her. "William she is a good girl, and capable of loving, and ready to turn her mother's ill-earned pelf to good account."

"Oh, what do you know about it?" said papa, scarcely believing what he heard, and turning himself round to this unexpected ally.

"I pitied the poor girl," she said, "and thought that a kind heart might do her good. I thought——" she stopped, blushing; "so I often went to the schoolmaster's, and we became the best of friends, and Katherine has let me teach her, and tell her all sorts of things; and I believe, William, if you have love and patience you may be very happy with her."

"Now, did I not always say," said papa, triumphantly, "that our little maiden Mary would bring a treasure into our house when you were not willing to take her in, old lady?"

The mamma nodded, smiling amid her tears.

"You were right," said William, with deep emotion, seizing the old man's hand; "you have an angel under your roof. Father, you were willing to spare Mary that she might keep and take care of my house with the heiress. Will you give me Mary alone? Then you will make two of your children happy, and rich in that peace and joy which is better than gold."

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried Herr Wezler, who in spite of all effort could *not* restrain the anger which *overcame him at the very mention of William's* *proposal*; "*nonsense!* You ought to know that a

man of business must think of something more than merely pleasing his taste, and Mary will not bring you into trouble."

Mary tried to speak, but William quickly vented her.

"A commercial friend of my late prince said, "has offered me the situation of an accountant with a salary of a thousand florins at first, The trial will soon be made. And now I think, father, that Mary can keep house with me. And the salary is to be raised afterwards added, "and I shall undoubtedly in time be a partner in the firm," continued William with increasing eagerness.

These plans for the future at least convinced Herr Wezler that indeed William was at his own heart, and the anger melted away and more.

"And so in this manner my children through all my forecastings for them," he said at last in a resigned tone. "But at any rate let us make an agreement with me that you will put the very first pay into a life insurance, in order that poor little mite there may never be left a less widow."

That was the conclusion of the marriage, and it had come about in such a way entirely without regard to any definite plan, seemed to them all like a dream.

The emotion soon passed away from the *mind*, and he retired with his morning

his own room, as if sulking, and there brooded over his ruined schemes. The mamma smiled and wept, and tenderly stroked Mary's pale face. Mary was very displeased at thinking that William had taken her by storm, without so much as saying, "By your leave." William at first defended himself jocosely, then in turn became seriously vexed, and then Mary became reconciled again; till at length mamma sent them both into the garden, that they might come to an understanding. Whether they did so I know not, but they came back happy, and Mary's blue orbs shone like suns. And yet Mary felt almost oppressed by her unexpected happiness, and was weighed down, too, by the gloomy mood of papa. She could not find courage to approach him as a daughter, and indeed this dreary manner of his hung like a cloud over them all.

THE WAVES SMOOTH THEMSELVES.

A letter came (and what is there in all the world that letters are not good for?) from Herr Kurz, the guardian of Katherine Crabbe. It stated that Herr Wezler having, as a friend of the deceased, always taken an interest in the welfare of her bereaved daughter, her guardian did himself the honour of announcing to him her recent betrothal. He added that if he had at their last meeting *rightly understood Herr Wezler*, then he must *regret that a certain arrangement so flattering to*

his ward had now become impossible ; however, the honour of the family, the union of hearts, &c., &c. The letter inclosed an elegantly-engraved betrothal-card, with the names of Captain Victor, Count of Schreckenhorst, and Katherine Crabbe.

Papa was struck dumb with astonishment as he beheld the frustration of all his grand schemes and visions. Of course he now perceived that even had William been free, he would have had no hope of success here ; for high as was his opinion of his son's merits, yet he had never thought on the bare possibility of his coming forward as a rival of an actual count. Mary scarcely knew whether to laugh or cry at the thought of her uncultivated pupil as Countess of Schreckenhorst. She had never desired so high a position for her, and this she told her in her letter, written out of an overflowing heart, and full of cordial good wishes.

From that time forth all went on pleasantly at the Wezlers. Mamma could now scarcely be seen amid the great heaps of linen by which she was surrounded, for now she had indeed a little daughter to fit out. As to Mary, she could not be more active than she always had been ; but she was now more often the companion of papa than even of mamma ; and when she felt free to show him all the little affectionate attentions of a daughter, which until now she had never had courage to do, and when she with such right hearty earnestness entered into all his plans, he would often exclaim *with much astonishment* to mamma—

"Well, really, upon my word, I hadn't myself the least idea that there was so much in the girl."

William had long since gone off to his engagements, and wrote frequent letters full of life and spirit, full of pleasure, love, and hope; while Mary looked so rosy and blooming that she seemed a fit partner for the handsome William.

ONE MORE INCIDENT.

The dowry was ready, the wedding-dress made, and none except mamma had any idea that there were yet a thousand indispensable things which nobody had ever thought of: fruit-bags, seed-bags, dusters, and rollers—it seemed really as if the provident spirit of papa had taken possession of her. Nothing could be modest or simple enough for Mary's taste. She never said how overcome she felt at being so entirely the receiver, for she knew that this would grieve mamma; but she struggled long in silence with this shy feeling, till she buried it deep in her lowly heart. And now everyone said that William might come as soon as he pleased, for Rica had swept and garnished with such desperate determination, that it was a wonder she had not rubbed through the floors.

One evening Mary was sitting alone in her little room, while papa and mamma were strolling together in the garden, and was agitated by all the *mad and joyous and pensive feelings* that meet

together in a maiden's heart at such a time, when Rica called out to her in a peculiar tone—

“Oh, Miss Mary, there is such a strange lady downstairs!”

Mary hastened down, and saw in the twilight a singular figure, attired in a long handsome silk dress, looped up with cords for walking, and the long ends of an elegant satin mantle tied behind into knots, like a handkerchief, while her face looked heated and dusty, as if having just come off a long journey. The black eyes peering out from amid a thick tangled mass of raven hair soon betrayed their owner.

“Why, Katherine,” said Mary, “how in the name of wonder did you get here? Come at once into my little room.”

Here the exhausted girl sat down, and began to laugh in the most violent manner. As soon as she could recover herself she exclaimed—

“Yes, here I am, indeed! It's all over with the count!”

“But how and why?” asked Mary.

“Oh, you shall soon hear all about it. I am good for something better than this, at any rate—that he should pay his debts with what my mother scraped together, and then put me in a corner like a sack when it is emptied. I did not like him from the very first, though I am a stupid thing, *which* I shall be all my life; but I suffered myself to be over-persuaded. Then they sent down a lady's-maid to me to dress me up, and they made

e in a carriage, and they engaged an old *lle* to teach me manners ; and they never have an hour in peace. And besides, I saw nd more that the count was ashamed of me, d not know how to wait in patience till he et my money, and push me out of the way ; I have played him a pretty trick, and have ay—and here I am !”

t what can you do now ?” asked Mary.

hall go to the schoolmaster’s, and marry the schoolmaster’s son—that is my solemn ination,” she said. “ I have always liked nd never cared for anyone else in all my lnd if he does not love me as much as you ed by William, yet I know that he will me, and that he will be kind to me, and so ney will be best bestowed on him.”

y felt in her inmost heart that Katherine the right, and that it would only be with eapons that she could now fight against her . Any effort would indeed have been use- r the wild girl scarcely gave Mary time to her privately with a cup of tea, before she her silk dress over her arm and hastily d off.

astonishment of the schoolmaster’s family, agent of the count, and all the storms and tions in the midst of which Katherine—the f this mischievous war—showed herself, and e only unconcerned person, may be more agined than described. After all, it did

not much signify ; the young teacher was a clever, blameless man ; the guardian was right glad to get this plague of a ward off his hands, and it was whispered that the noble count suffered his feeling of honour to be solaced by a substantial consideration. Katherine came afterwards as a bride, beaming with joy, to William and Mary, who had sailed into port before her, and William became perfectly reconciled to the long-feared Fraulein Crabbe.

Martin, a grave, kind-hearted, conscientious man, accepted as a sacred obligation the unconditional confidence with which Katherine threw herself and her treasure into his arms, and vowed to watch over the soul and body of the thoughtless girl, and to manage with inviolable fidelity the property which had cost so many tears. He and Katherine lived together on a modest estate, in a position of competence and independence ; his sister became the active helper of the young wife, who with indescribable satisfaction felt for the first time in her life thoroughly at home.

As Papa Wezler came by degrees to an understanding of all the affair, he seated himself in his chair, as if he thought the whole world had come to a stand : that went beyond his sphere of vision, so he gave up pondering over it.

SOMETHING GOOD FOR A CONCLUSION.

We must give one more glance into the home-life of William and Mary. You would hardly have

thought it possible that such a neat comfortable home as theirs could have been found in a narrow street of the capital. The want of a beautiful outlook was never felt, for all was so pleasant within. Mary's flowers were of the cheapest sort; "So much the more," she said to herself, "do they remind one of a garden of one's own." And whenever William allowed himself to express a wish for anything beyond their means, Mary would jestingly lament that he did not go to the Crab-catching.

One day William was just expected home from the office; the little dinner-table was made larger by adding to it a smaller one; the finest tablecloth, the pride of mamma, was laid, and all the best plate had been set out by Mary to the most advantage; for at twelve o'clock the fast coach would come in, and by this, for the first time, papa and mamma were to come to visit them in their new home. Mary was just debating within herself whether she should leave the bubbling pudding to take its chance, and go and meet her parents, when she heard the heavy footstep of papa already on the stairs. She quickly opened the door to give more light, and saw the dearly-loved people quietly making their way up, while William behind was bounding up with a hop, skip, and jump. And now came the joyous greetings, and the admiring wonder *that everything looked so pretty. William soon brought in the housekeeping book, which had been posted as carefully as if millions*

were to be reckoned therein, and pointed with pride to their little economies, and to Mary's punctual accounts. But Mary hurried them off to the dinner-table, saying that the soup-dumplings would get cold.

"Wait a minute, Mary," said papa; "a letter came yesterday, addressed to you in your maiden name. It has been wandering to several places before it reached us. Read that first."

Mary sat down and opened her letter. Not one of her gentle, peaceful features changed; she read it quietly to the end, then putting aside some papers which it enclosed, she handed the letter to William, with a face radiant with happiness, such as he had scarcely witnessed even on the evening of their betrothal. William read aloud:—

"MY POOR DEAR CHILD,

"Whether you are yet alive, or where you are, I know not; but I think in our old neighbourhood something must be known about you. I will not tell you how it was that desperation drove me from house and home, an involved and dishonoured man. I was almost driven out of my very senses by the dreadful torment of that wretch of a woman. May God forgive me, my poor child, at that time I did not think much of you. I have had a rough and hard time of it here, and this was necessary for me in order that I might have *leisure* for reflection, and for looking into my own *heart*. Now that sorrow is over. God has blessed my industry more than I could have expected, &

has brought back again all my fatherly feeling towards you. My child, I herewith send a sum sufficient to bring you out to me, if, indeed, you are yet living, and are alone and homeless in the Fatherland. It will suffice, also, to pay up all my old debts, which, however, cannot be so large as at that time I believed they were. If my child is no longer living, then let all those who have shown her kindness share the money among them. Are you, however, which I can scarcely venture to believe, betrothed or married, and happy? Then, dear child, remain where you are, and some day I will come to you. I cannot possibly, from the nature of my business, send you a large dowry, but I can, without inconvenience, give you as a yearly gift, a sum like that which I now forward. If God is gracious to me, and you are yet living, then write to me soon, and tell me if you have yet a child's affection for the father who once forsook you."

Mary placed the bill of exchange which had come in the letter into the hands of the astonished papa.

"Now thank God that you are already married," said he; "you know you were my child just the same before this happened, were you not?"

Mary wept like a child to think that she had really a father, and said smilingly to William, "Ah, now you have truly caught a little crab."

The mamma, however, folded her hands, and said—

*"Ways Thou hast of all ways best,
Thine expedients ever right;
What Thou dost is wholly blest,
Thy footpath always is pure light."*

Adolf never became a cacique. For him it been ordained that he should give up his life his ministry. After long labour abundantly blessed he came home to lay his head on his mother's bosom, and to lie down in the Fatherland to last rest. But he bequeathed to them all a inheritance of faith and peace, which sweetened their sorrow.

Whether or not Herr Wezler has now begun to make plans for the future of his grandchildren know not. I almost think that he will, this time leave it in the hands of the good God.

IV.

Re-union.

"Then rose the generous purpose high,
 Affection's softer spells had bound them,
 And visions bright came flitting by,
 And the fair future gathered round them.

"But Time, that moves with heavy tread,
 Trips lightly with the happy-hearted,
 And soon their hour of pleasure fled,
 Too soon, alas! and then they parted."

PARTING.

AGAIN and again it has been lamented that the lovely beauty of our woods, the mysterious quiet of our green secluded vales, has been disturbed and destroyed by the clamour of iron-foundries and the smoke of factory chimneys. I will not add to the list of the lamentations, however deeply I may have loved the solitudes and the green trees and flowers.

Amid all the working of wheels and the din of machinery, there is yet enough of quiet glory to be seen within the green wood. If we so rarely find and enjoy it, it is not the fault of the steady genius of industry. *It arises from either the restlessness or the indolence of men who would rather suffer themselves to be pushed through the world*

amidst crowd and clatter, than wander far away amid the still leafy glades to the fairy nooks which yet lie hidden here and there among them.

The Vale of the Black Forest which we are about, in imagination, to enter, is, alas ! now all alive with the noise of wheels, the ceaseless beating of hammers, and the eager running to and fro of wild-looking, black-faced men. But near to this foundry and forge stands a pleasant dwelling, to which there is connected a tastefully laid-out and richly-blooming garden.

In a light, airy summer arbour, encircled by the wild vine which hung down in festoons from its roof, sat, at the time when my story begins, two such charming young maidens that even the most enthusiastic lover of the wild and picturesque in Nature might cease his laments over the injured landscape, and forget for a moment that the Dryads had been scared away. They were still very young, both at that pleasant age when we feel all youth and happiness, and scarcely believe in the changes and sorrows of human life, nor have ever yet been obliged to practise in the smallest degree the duty of resignation.

The taller and more slender of the two girls, and the one who was distinguished by the far greater ease and elegance of her movements, was Alma, the only daughter of Herr Mainhard, the owner of these iron-works. She was the admired and petted child of the whole valley, and all the *inhabitants*, from the clerk and foreman even to

the sooty journeyman-smiths, would cease their work for a moment to gaze after her whenever the graceful lily of the woods chanced to pass by them in her youthful loveliness.

Beautiful, Alma certainly was, though as yet that beauty had not reached its greatest perfection. Brown wavy hair clustered above a white forehead, and dark blue eyes, and a sweetly-formed mouth ; and there was diffused over the whole countenance an air so full of dignity, mingled with soft womanly grace such as falls to the lot of but the few of those only who may be called Nature's favourites, while, happily for young hearts and young eyes, they may find pretty and gentle and good maidens everywhere as certainly as they may look every spring for the flowers which deck the land.

The young Alma stood the indisputable queen of the vale ; and though she was quite aware of her power, and rejoiced in it with girlish pleasure, yet she did not misuse it. There was, however, one heart over which she could not feel that she had gained supremacy, and this was her father's. She clung to him indeed with deep filial tenderness, but she had from her earliest childhood been accustomed to so much dignified reserve in his manner, and had regarded him as so surrounded by a halo of almost unapproachable greatness, that, at the period of which I am writing, Alma was under the conviction that, *excepting the king himself, there was scarcely a more important and eminent man in the state than her own papa, Herr Mainhard.*

Herr Mainhard had passed his young days in very limited circumstances and a very inferior position, and had by extraordinary diligence, hard privations, and rare perseverance, with great difficulty gradually risen in life, till he at length became possessed of his now valuable and well-worked estate. This gentleman prized his present position in some proportion to the strenuous efforts which he had used to acquire it, and he reckoned himself by no means the least among those great men who have soared upward alone and unfriended from lowly and unfavourable beginnings. He had first become acquainted with his late wife when she was a poor factory girl, and when he was the overworked junior clerk of a large cotton manufactory. He had given her during her friendless youth all the help and protection which he could possibly do, and when after the weary toil of long, long years he had earned a home for himself, he led thither the modest maiden whom he had silently loved in his youth, though her youthful bloom had then long since passed away. The poor girl had never for a moment allowed herself to dream that a home like this, or so much happiness, was in store for her, and she frequently acknowledged her husband's generosity, even to the day of her death, with a touching thankfulness which Herr Mainhard received with most Pacha-like complacency.

And thus it was that, unused in his every-day life to see anyone about him who was his equal, and confirmed on all sides in his high opinion of

; he claimed instinctively from his daughter and submission to his will which had been and by his wife ; and he had, as he considered, reward for his generosity when he perceived all that beauty which in his wife had so added, heightened and refined by its mental ion.

Waker, his housekeeper, knew far better of himself with what idolatrous tenderness Lainhard really clung to the child ; and she saw too that her own advantage lay in unlimited indulgence to all the whims and of that child.

while dwelling at some length on this young of the vale, we have almost forgotten her nion in the arbour, who was a sweet young owing however nothing at all of the queen mer. She was indeed no Alma— but simply Louisa. Louisa had a round, rosy face, and ly brown eye, which looked laughingly, yet somewhat timidly, on all who appeared her. She was a clergyman's daughter, distant relation as well as god-child of Herrard, and she had now been allowed to leave for the first time in her life for a visit to the where the girls had, naturally enough, after tting together for three days, become most ntial friends.

re is no visitor to a house who proves more le than such a maiden guest, for without any particular demand on anyone's atten-

tion, she nestles down, and at once accommodates herself to all the ways of the family. Young men are indeed at times acceptable visitors, but they are more suited for fine weather, or a few days' count excursion, or a party at home when it rains. In the intervals, unless indeed they are especially amiable, they, with their long legs, are perpetual in the way, and there seems nothing for them to do but to stand lounging about the windows. A young girl, however, with her knitting or her embroidery, which never gets finished, is always in the right place, and always at hand when she is wanted. She is sure to have, lying prudently at the bottom of her trunk, a pretty dress fitted for company, ready for any special piece of good fortune in that way which may occur ; but at the same time she previously expresses no desire for such entertainment. If she shares the bedroom of her young lady friend, what wonderful things they have to talk about before going to sleep, and after the candle is put out. The two girls in the summer-house certainly had not as yet had many very interesting experiences to communicate, but Alma, who had already seen something of the world, knew both that she was now beautiful and would one day become much more so, while Louisa, who was only fifteen, and had now quitted her native village and her father's home for the first time, and who was still so young and innocent that she felt in a great perplexity if a strange gentleman only wished her good morning, could by no means be



at all comprehended Alma's confidences. So their talk turned mostly on the simple scenes of their childhood, and on such little events as formed the prospects of their coming days.

"What makes you so quiet, Louisa?" asked Alma, as she sat there looking at her silent friend.

"It all seems so strange to me," said the younger girl; "I always feel as if I must wait till the noise ceases, and it never stops."

"No, it never stops," replied Alma, with a sigh. "Only think, how are my inmost feelings ever to find expression here; for there is beating and hammering going on even amid the sweetest dreams of night. Oh, how I often long for quiet."

"Only come home with me, and then you can perfectly satisfy this longing," said Louisa, laughing; "I must say I have at times more quietness than enough. Our parsonage stands in such a lonely spot, beside the church, and my brothers are all away from home. My father talks very little, and my mother, who is continually occupied, cannot bear loud talking. One day passes so exactly like another, that I have often a great desire to get out into the world where there's a little more to be heard. I really like even your noise here, which is not at all musical, but still it is something of life and motion; at home I often chatter with the maid *only just for the pleasure of hearing my own voice.*"

And now from the woodland heights there came,

sounding musically through the air, two voices chanting—

“Hie away into the wild woods
With loud shout and clang of horns.”

And the young girls saw the forms of two young men coming, with rapid steps, down the path from the wood. One was dressed in a green cap, and wore a sportsman's bag slung across his shoulder. He had a small black moustache, and this, combined with his manly figure, gave him a very dauntless and vigorous look. The other youth, who was dressed in a black well-brushed coat, and who seemed of a quieter and shyer nature, still carried the good old-fashioned knapsack once so general, but of which, in our days, even a young journeyman of any education is beginning to be ashamed.

“Cousin Rudolf!” exclaimed Alma, and a bright crimson overspread her sweet face.

“May God bless you, my little cousin,” he called out with joyous voice, as he threw a lovely bunch of wild flowers up into the arbour, vaulted nimbly over the garden wall, and laughing, shook hands with his fair cousin, uncertain whether he might, as in the days of his boyhood, venture a more tender greeting; but this Alma avoided, drawing back and smiling amid her deep blushes. His companion in the short black coat, who seemed to have far less dexterity, felt rather awkward standing there at the foot of the vale; for the two cousins, in the warmth of their greeting, had quite forgotten him, till the

timid Louisa, though reddening with shyness, went down and opened the garden gate for him.

It now suddenly occurred for the first time to Rudolf's mind that he ought to introduce the stranger. "My friend and neighbour, Hermann Kling, student of theology," he said, adding immediately, "My cousin, Fraulein Alma Mainhard."

"Louisa Maler, from Mühlberg," said Alma; and now, after these introductions, there was an awkward pause, till Rudolf took up the conversation, and in the most humorous manner related to them how he had been obliged to take charge of this inexperienced theologian, who, though he was a university man, was now out on his first wanderings about the world, and how he had been obliged to bestow upon him the greatest care and wisest of counsels.

Hermann soon grew as animated and as full of merriment as his friend. It seemed that Frau Kling, a pastor's widow, and Frau Mainhard, Rudolf's mother, occupied at that time some apartments under the same roof, and hence the student and the pupil of the Polytechnic Institution had soon become friends. Kling, who with his mother led a somewhat monotonous life, was glad indeed to accept Rudolf's proposal of joining him in a little holiday excursion to his uncle's; and he became quite at home with his new companions in a far shorter time than *he had ever fancied he possibly could have been.*

Frau Waker was quite prepared for the merry

guest, who came every year, and whom, next to Alma, she regarded as her most dearly-loved favourite; and as dinner-time drew nigh the young folks felt certain enough of finding that she had looked well after their requirements. Frau Waker was a good kind of woman, but that she seemed to live in a perpetual state of quiet misery and loud sighs—except indeed, when, for a variety, she took to low sighing. It cannot be wondered at, however, for her married life had been remarkably unhappy. Her first husband had run away from her, and now she had run away from her second. She lived in constant fear lest the latter should discover her retreat, and thus it was natural enough that she could not make herself a very agreeable hostess; while no one ever had courage to ask her how she was getting on, because all knew very well that she would immediately open upon them the floodgates of her sorrows. It was, therefore, fortunate that Alma, though young, had already fully acquired the art of enacting the lady of the house.

Notwithstanding her almost childlike simplicity of manner, yet this lily of the vale was not at all wanting in any of the social accomplishments of a town lady. Her life was by no means so secluded and lonely as it might seem. There were roads on all sides leading to small towns and fashionable watering-places; and Alma had unawares acquired quite as much of the worldly spirit of society as was *good for her*.

Herr Mainhard came among the party at dinner-time in the full majesty of that characteristic dignity which he never quite laid aside even in the smallest domestic circle. Dear as his nephew was to him, yet the young man had never, with all his youthful courage and spirit, been able to break down this awful barrier, and stand on an equal footing with his uncle. As to the young student of theology, he was overpowered with awe, and sat wondering to himself how it was that he had never known till now what a very important person the owner of an iron-foundry is.

Herr Mainhard never came home in good humour : there were daily a thousand causes of annoyance among the people of his establishment, high and low, whether clerks or smiths ; but the sight of his daughter Alma always unconsciously soothed him, and guests were at all times graciously received and entertained, as became the honour of his house.

"Now, Rudolf," said the uncle, after their first conversations were over, "it is quite time that you should be looking seriously about you. In one more year you will come into the business, and then you will have to know all about it ; so I should like you this afternoon to take a turn with me through the works."

"Oh, not to-day, father," said Alma, entreatingly — "not to-day ; that can be done in wet weather. We must take *advantage of this fine afternoon for a walk in the woods.* Louisa and Herr Kling are *see them for the first time,* and poor Rudolf

must have the enjoyment of one day's holiday, at any rate."

"I never have a holiday," said Herr Mainhard, majestically; "but never mind. Rudolf will soon have good sense enough to see for himself that it is a very important thing to look a little into the business which he has to learn."

Ah! they were not at all sensible, these young people; they only felt very happy and very much relieved when Herr Mainhard departed to the foundry. They set about making preparations forthwith for the afternoon in the woods, and they packed away in their baskets and crammed into their pockets the provisions which Frau Waker had intended for supper; and afterwards all set off joyfully, in perfect indifference to the whirl and drive of the busy men around them, and full of the thoughtless, buoyant egotism of youth.

"We must show you the way," said Alma, laughing, as she walked along, leaning on Rudolf's arm, and calling out to the two clerical children, as she called them, who were following the merry couple, and who were looking and feeling shy, as if they did not very well know what they were to say to each other. The dwellers of the vale gazed with much pleasure on their young queen as she passed, arm-in-arm, with the stripling. It had long since been quite a settled thing in their minds that the *cousin* was one day to be Alma's husband, and the *successor* of the stern papa; and they believed that they should in future times find in the young man

a kinder master than Herr Mainhard had ever been.

It did not seem as if the two young people troubled themselves much about the future, or the factory undertakings. They had much more interesting matters to talk of to each other. They had long accounts to give of things which had happened to each since last they rambled together; and when in addressing each other they turned to speak, each felt full of wonder at remarking in the other how much more of a man Rudolf had become, and how Alma had grown into so much fuller womanhood during the year in which they had been separated. These subjects were enough for them, and they had neither eyes nor thoughts to spare for the beauties of the outer world, or for the coming events of life. It was quite as well that Hermann and Louisa, from mere shyness towards each other, were very intently occupied in studying the beauties of the woodland; and were filled with admiration as they looked through the trees down the lovely paths leading into the deep green shadow, and beheld the varied scenery of the vale below; or were standing in delighted astonishment every now and then beside the charming little moss-covered banks beneath the boughs of the knotted oaks.

At length these young wild birds had chosen a nest which would *suit them all*. Rudolf and Alma *sat themselves down on a green bank beneath a grove of alders, and assigned a pleasant little nook*

opposite for the two young ecclesiastics, as persisted in calling them. The provisions arranged on the smooth trunk of a felled beech which lay between. Hermann and Louisa gradually getting over their embarrassment; in order to escape the mischievous glances of opposite companions, they walked off after him to gather strawberries, while the others, not to be thus alone, dismissed them with indignity.

"May God ever bless thee, Alma," said R when the others were fairly gone.

He offered her his hand, and the whole of his heart spoke out in the earnest look with which he regarded her. He found her after his absence still more lovely than he had ever dreamed that she could become.

"And may God bless thee too, Rudolf," Alma, taking the offered hand.

Neither knew very well what to say, but read in the eyes of the other the dawn of a happiness beyond all that they had ever imagined. The opening of a bright golden day such as neither yet ever seen. And the youth felt strongly impelled to wind his arm around the delicate and to call her his own—his very own; but he smiled so calmly and innocently, and seemed happy in this quiet trust, that he could not venture to do so.

"Oh, how still and quiet all is here! Thank God for such stillness," said Alma,

sigh which seemed to come from her inmost heart. "Oh, how delightful! You cannot think how I wish for quietness, and how I say to myself continually, 'Oh, if there were only here one hour when all would be quite, quite silent!'"

"And yet you were cradled amid these great hammers," said Rudolf, with a smile. "It is the one sound of your birthplace, and fire and steel are your natural dowry."

"Oh," said Alma, "if I thought that I should remain all my life long amidst this knocking and clanging, that I should never escape from it, the idea would be intolerable. Only think of the year which I passed at Montmirail, and how much good it did me."

"Go into a nunnery," said Rudolf, jestingly; "it is quieter there than in any other place that I know of."

Alma shook her head.

"No," she said, "the cloister is not the place for me; I must have human beings about me. I long to be among people different from those which we see in the valley here, where there are only Cyclops. I do not wish to live in a large city—there one is lost among the crowd; but I think I should like a small town, where I could see friendly faces and hear glad voices as often as I liked; and yet, when in my own little home, it would be still—oh, so still! The house of my choice should have a little balcony and a little garden, and there should be no noise except the merry twitter of the birds. Oh,

how delightful that must be! I cannot tell you how worrying a loneliness is such as mine in this place, in the very midst of noise and din."

"And who is to be the master of your beautiful and quiet house?" said Rudolf, laughing. "Are you to live there all alone?"

"Oh, I know very well all about that," said Alma, mischievously, and blushing deeply, as she gave a half-glance at her companion from under her long eyelashes.

And now the two young ecclesiastics came back laughing loudly as they bounded over the wood path. They had become quite sociable, and the mutual shyness had thoroughly passed away. They assured the worldlings, as they termed their friends, that they had found the most delicious of raspberries, but that they did not intend scratching their hands for their sakes, for they might do that for themselves.

And then they all set forth on a general excursion through the woods, all the party feeling calmly happy. Rudolf had become very silent and thoughtful; even Alma's raillery failed to rouse him, only when returning homewards in the twilight they came down the path where the beating of hammers began again to make itself heard, and the forges were sending forth their gleam of fire, and pouring out clouds of smoke which veiled the red glow of the evening sky, then only did Rudolf recover his cheerfulness, and said hastily to Alma, "Yes, you are right, it is not pleasant to live amid

so much noise ; you shall some day be quiet, my dear Alma, quite still, aye, and amid lovely scenery too."

His conversation with Alma had aroused a new train of thought in the mind of Rudolf. From the earliest days which he could remember, he had spent every holiday here in this valley ; the beating of the hammers, the rushing of the wheel, seemed to him like a sound of his native home, and his heart had always bounded with joy as the old familiar tones interrupting the stillness of the wood, came gradually upon his ears. He had been wont, when a merry boy, at the very first note of their nearness, to throw up his little cap and then run down the remainder of the hill in a wild merry gallop. How intimately the image of his lovely cousin had come to be associated in his mind with this vale he himself had never distinctly discovered till now. For the first time in his life he became conscious that a bright morning star seemed to be rising on him, as often as he saw the light, graceful form advancing to meet him. In former days she used to come to him walking by the side of her pale, delicate mother, a picture of young fresh life ; in later days she came alone, a blooming maiden, always with the most joyful greeting on her lip, for the sight of her gay, buoyant cousin was indeed ever a pleasant interruption to the uniform life of the valley. *The cousins had at all times been the best of friends. That childish timidity which, as a girl advances*

towards womanhood, often seems to keep boys and girls at a distance from each other, had never fallen upon their intercourse, for neither of the two had a playfellow of the same sex. Rudolf caught squirrels for Alma, carved little baskets for her out of acorns, and brought home from the most retired haunts of the wood the sweetest and rarest of wild flowers. Alma, on her part, would often surprise her cousin with gifts of all sorts of feminine handiwork; napkin-rings, presented long before he was favoured at table with a napkin; purses, and pocket-books, and neatly-hemmed handkerchiefs. Gradually the thought arose in Rudolf's mind, he scarcely knew how, that some day Alma would be his wife, and that he would be the owner of the foundry, which latter did not seem to him any wondrous piece of good fortune, though it might seem so to strangers, and even to his uncle.

Rudolf was but the poor son of a councillor's widow, left in humble circumstances. He felt no objection to the destiny which seemed assigned for him, only that his path seemed almost too smooth for his taste and his love of adventure. He would gladly have combated more dangers and difficulties. He had when a lad worked away most bravely among the hammers and forges, and found it pleasant enough when he was allowed to give his orders there. By degrees, however, his delight in *this noisy trade* had vanished; he saw his uncle continually in ill-humour, and perpetually dissatisfied.

fied with some person or thing. On the other hand, he regarded it as the most charming of all occupations to walk over hills and fields in search of geological specimens, or rare plants; and he visited as often as he could venture to do the kindly physician who occupied the first floor of the house in which they lived, bringing away frequently from his scientific friend—to the terror of his mother and little sisters—skulls and arm-bones, with which to deck his room.

But Alma and the iron-works ever had been, hitherto, inseparably connected in Rudolf's mind with any dream or scheme for the future, although as yet he had not bestowed very much thought on the subject. He was still so young that he would have been ashamed of himself if he had felt that he was entertaining serious thoughts about marriage; and besides, what would all the other polytechnics have said to it? Whenever the holidays had passed over he had felt a little sort of home-sickness, a longing after his little cousin and the wood, and always rejoiced greatly whenever he saw them again after absence. But this had been all. This time, however, though they had been only a year apart, yet Alma's beauty had burst upon his view with a brightness which astonished him.

And now that Alma seemed more than ever precious in the eyes of her cousin, and he felt more strongly than he *had done* the desire to call her *his own*, so now for the first time he had fully felt *the weight of the great sacrifice* he would have to

make if he renounced all his thoughts and studie all the scientific pursuits so dear to his young spirit to enter on a business which had nothing whatever that was attractive to him. No one would have imagined when he came thither on that pleasant summer morning, in gay, boyish spirits, that he was really secretly fighting a hard battle, and that he had laid his dearest dreams of future greatness at the feet of the innocent girl at his side. But Alma had now herself declared that the valley was not dear to her heart, and this sounded like the word of a king which can open a prison door. He was then free to pursue the knowledge for which his heart was yearning ; and he would, in fact, by this means really fulfil Alma's secret wishes.

Rudolf made not the slightest account of all the difficulties and the long toil of the weary path through which he must walk before he could establish himself in the medical profession, and maintain a home of his own. He did not think such obstacles worth talking about. This mountain he overleaped in thought in the effervescence of youthful joy, and even Alma had never seen him so lively and entertaining as he was the remaining few weeks of the holiday in the midst of the little circle around him. So contagious was his mirth that even the theological student became cheerful and merry, and the shy Louisa seemed as if she could never shut her mouth for laughing. He wanted courage only to come to an explanation with his uncle, by whose side meantime he was

often walk patiently through the foundry, giving no heed to any of his wise suggestions and orders. If his uncle gave him a commission to execute, he would sometimes perform it with as much careless indifference as if he had been a prince who was inspecting some property of his own which he did not value ; so that the old practised workpeople often shook their heads a little suspiciously when they talked about him.

A few happy weeks were passed by the young people together, and then the holidays came to an end, and Louisa too was recalled home by her parents. The sad morning of packing was over, and Louisa had copied out various recipes of Frau Waker's, and written out long poems from the scrap-book of her friend ; sadly sweet poems they were, such as young girls delight in. Hermann too was sitting in the arbour with Louisa's album lying before him, the beautiful red, spic and span new album which had been given her on the day of her confirmation, and in which till now nobody had written a word except her parents, for she had never thought of venturing to ask her godfather to write in it. Alma had just finished reading a touching poem in which—

“The heart with all its throbbings,
The heart in all its bliss,”

was the chief theme, and which the maiden herself did not quite understand, and for that very reason found *so much the more touching*. The young *theologian* would gladly have written something

that was really beautiful in Louisa's album thing special, something of his own, which never before existed, but alas! no inspiration would come over him, and at last he only a sweet poem on the dreams of youth which read and learned by heart.

Meanwhile, Rudolf had some business transactions with his uncle before quitting his house. Herr Mainhard was beginning to feel rather dissatisfied with him. "It is quite time that you come into the business," said the stern gentleman "in the spring you will be leaving the Polytechnic School, and then you must be pleased for to renounce all theoretical studies, and take your way up in this place from the bottom tree. We want skilful workers here, not idlers."

Even Rudolf felt awed by his all-powerful uncle. He grew hot and cold before he could venture to offer a word of objection; and yet, vent he must be.

"Uncle," he began, with some hesitation, "I don't really know if I have any especial fitness for this business. I have before now thought of other things; my whole inclination draws me towards the medical profession. Any good worth to be reached only by giving the whole heart to it, by working at it with the whole might and strong will."

The features of his uncle assumed a rigid, staring expression which quite frightened him.

property at the greatest cost of all my energies,
with struggles against difficulties of which you
have no idea. After the sudden death of my
father, who would, I feel sure, have proved a
heir to the foundries, and would have fol-
lowed in my footsteps, I did think it possible that
the son of my half-brother, might perhaps
have applied the loss. There is no need of com-
plaint where such good prospects are concerned.
I am altogether free to go which way you will.
Well, remember me kindly to your mother.
I send a little pocket-money for you for next half

as quite impossible for Rudolf to touch the
money without any embarrassed feeling he had
hitherto been accustomed to receive from

eyes looked with mute inquiring glances his, and read on his features a far different expression from the careless glance of boyhood so there. She observed with fear and sorrow strong man's firm will was struggling for might though a proud hope shone in his eye.

"You are still young, only eighteen, are you Alma?" he said.

"Oh, yes; you know that," replied Alma in surprise.

"I am nineteen," he answered, with a hurried anxiety, "but I can work, and struggle and strive. Alma, can you wait? Can you be faithful to me? I shall not perhaps come to you very soon again. Will you think of me the same?"

Alma glanced timidly up at him in much surprise.

"Do pray, Rudolf, tell me what is the matter," she said. "What have you and my father been talking about?"

"I will write and tell you all about it, Farewell, Alma," he said, as once only he pressed his lips on hers, and grasped her small hand as if he knew not how to relinquish it.

They had reached the summit of the hill. Hermann and Louisa, who had walked forward in an innocent unconsciousness of these sorrows, stood waiting for their friends; and the sun, which had only cast a few solitary gleams into the valley below, shone out now in golden glory on the greenwood. A deliciously-fresh morning.

came sighing through the fir-trees. Alma had taken off her hat, and was standing there where the clear sunlight fell on all her youthful beauty. Rudolf looked at her with unspeakable woe; the morning was so bright, and the air so balmy, and yet he found that all at once his merry spirits had fled. The parting!—yes, the parting! This was the only idea now in his mind, the only words that would ring in his ear. “Farewell, Alma,” he said, at last, and all the sorrow of his heart and all his unspoken affection lay in the glance of his eye and the tone of his voice. “Farewell till we meet again,” she said, dejectedly. She could not understand his conduct.

The coachman who was to drive Louisa showed some signs of impatience, and with her eyes full of tears which she suppressed as much as possible, the younger girl took a voluble farewell of her friend. Rudolf timidly offered her his hand, and she felt this morning a certain shyness towards him. As to Hermann, nothing had occurred which should require her to say farewell to him in silence, yet it was very affecting to have to part from him, though neither of them felt by any means sure whether it was by inclination or mere accident that, for the last few days, they had been so much together. “Farewell, Fraulein Louisa,” said Hermann; “I wish you a pleasant summer, and I sincerely hope *that circumstances may so fall out that we may all meet again.*”

“Oh yes, certainly; I hope so, too; farewell,

Herr Kling," said Louisa, hastily ; and then turning very red, she began vexing herself at having expressed herself so unsuitably. And they parted.

The two young men walked on in silence into the glorious greenwood, while Alma took her way back with downcast heart into the vale, and never even saw how Louisa was waving her little wet handkerchief out of the carriage window.

"When friends must part, to say they're fain,
Farewell then, till we meet again—we meet again."

Meeting again ! Ah, how lightly had this word sounded to Alma on the many former occasions on which she had uttered it, and how many days might yet lie in the distance before the next meeting really came. She went home with a sadness and thoughtfulness in her heart such as she had never before experienced after any parting. Home seemed very dreary too ; and what with the sighings of Frau Waker, and the looks of dissatisfaction of papa, Alma, for the first time in her young life, began to think seriously of a day when this state of things might be altogether different in a home of her own.

It was not long before Herr Mainhard received a letter from Rudolf, acknowledging respectfully and thankfully all that his uncle had done up to the present time towards his education. He enclosed various testimonials from the professors of the school, all of whom gave it as their opinion that *he was more fitted for a studious profession than for any commercial undertaking*, and these opinions

formed the ground on which Rudolf expressed his determination to devote himself to the study of medicine. He added that, under these circumstances, he could but feel that he had no longer a claim on any kindness from his uncle ; he entreated only that he would not be angry with him, and withdraw from him all the friendly thoughts which he had so long borne towards him, as he, on his part, would do all in his power to bring no discredit on the name which he bore.

Herr Mainhard, who was little accustomed to be thwarted in any design which he had formed, saw in this disappointment just one of the most perplexing events that could have occurred. His nephew, who inherited his name, and whom he had ever thought of as the intended husband of his daughter, and on this account destined to be the right and natural heir to his property, was now deliberately relinquishing all claim upon him. It was in consequence of his long-fixed idea of the young man's prospects that he had rejoiced from time to time to see Rudolf growing into a fine intelligent youth. He considered that the good fortune which was awaiting his nephew was prodigious for a man with his poor expectations in life, and he had believed that the youth would have been overwhelmed with amazement and gratitude at the thought of so excellent a future position. And now it seemed that *simply* on account of the lad's *boyish, stupid whims*, all his excellent schemes *were to come to an end.*

Herr Mainhard did not favour his nephew with any reply to his letter, but he wrote to his sister-in-law, laying before her in a very decided and impressive manner all that he had done for her son, although his father had been but his half-brother. He added some statement of what farther benefits he had intended to confer on him, and even hinted pretty plainly the highest and best gift which he had designed for him in the future—his only daughter—and such a daughter!

Herr Mainhard often paused from his writing, quite overcome by the sense of his own generous intentions, and he concluded his letter by telling his sister-in-law that she had better strive at once to influence her wrong-headed son, and induce him to return as a penitent to him, adding that he did not intend granting him a very long time to think over the matter.

Ah! how difficult it was to the good widow of the Chancery councillor to explain everything to the stern brother-in-law, whom she held in as great a respect and awe as would have seemed sufficient to Herr Mainhard even in his proudest moments! How hard she found it to tell him that the foolish, wilful youth still persisted in treading beneath his feet all the good fortune that might have been his! She told him, too, that his masters and the good doctor, who resided in the same house with them, *had* by all their remarks even confirmed Rudolf *in this* decision; and she ended by expressing an *earnest* hope that, if the young man should achieve

anything great in the profession which he had himself chosen—and this she herself certainly expected he would do—that the uncle, who had so long shown him so much generous kindness, would not entirely withdraw his fostering care from him.

The anger of Herr Mainhard was terrible—it was sublime; it was like the rage of a lion, except that he did not exactly roar, but contented himself with thundering out the word “Begone!” to one of the foremen of the factory who entered the counting-house just then to ask him a question. He came home muttering in an under-voice tones which seemed like the roar of distant thunder. One of the joints at table was a saddened, not sufficiently-browned piece of roast veal. Frau Waker remarked as she looked at it, that really the butter in which she placed it fairly bubbled for heat; and one would think it was out of pure spite to her, and because she was only a poor defenceless woman, that it would not turn brown. And now the cloud discharged itself upon this innocent object, which, together with the plates, that were fortunately pewter ones, all flew out of the window. Frau Waker, true to her duty as an old servant of the family, went out as soon as possible to prevent the scandal that might arise, and also to rescue for the servants’ table some of the fragments of the meat; but she thought to herself, on her way thither, that *neither Herr Waker (her second), to say nothing of Herr Zwissler (her first), had ever been such a*

brute as her master; though she must confess that she had never before witnessed, even in him, such an outbreak of rage as when he dashed away a joint of veal which had cost sevenpence a pound.

"Alma," said the father, meanwhile, to his pale, affrighted daughter, "remember it is my positive command that, from this time forth, all intercourse with that young fellow who once called himself my nephew, is to be broken off entirely and for ever. You are never to hold the least communication with him, either by writing or conversation. Please to observe that this is my unalterable command: and I shall to-day cause this to be told also to the young man by that foolish woman, his mother. Remember, now, that I reckon on inviolable obedience."

Alma would not have ventured to make any reply, even if her father had not quitted the room the moment he had finished this speech. She remained sitting alone, in sorrowful thought—alone with the first deep heart-sorrow which, since her mother's death, had crossed her sunny life.

A letter from Rudolf, which was conveyed to her, spite of her father's prohibition, through the means of his mother and the sighing interference of Frau Waker, informed her of the circumstances which had so fearfully stirred up her father's wrath.

"In your hands, dear Alma," said the young man, "I leave the decision of my fate. As we are both so young, I have never before dwelt upon the future; but I feel now that I could do anything

you—all—even undertake a foundry and set myself with perverse workmen and cheat-verseers, amid the clatter of wheels and g of hammers all my life long. But that, you do not yourself desire; you wish for and I will some day make our home more and happy than you can imagine. You well how much and strongly, even from my god, I have been drawn towards the study of natural sciences and of medicine; I thought that as I might have been able to devote myself to commerce even in the business which your father chosen for me; but I find now that a man, if he aspires for success, must give himself up entirely to mercantile or official occupation. Alma, I think that I am not deceiving myself when I say I could make good attainments in a profession which I truly loved. I have spirit and perseverance—I do not shrink from privations; but, can you wait? Can you be true to me? Proud as you are, and admired as you will be, will you keep your heart for me only, till I can come to take you to my home? For I feel certain that I can win an honourable name and position for myself, your father will not remain inexorable. I will repay your love, Alma, a thousand-fold, I will ever bear you in my heart; and no toil will be too great for me, if I can only earn honour and prosperity, and obtain all that could make me *useful to you*. But it will need patience, faith, and silent trust; for I will never, even in

any extremity, entangle you in a secret correspondence—neither will we embitter your father defying his commands. We must trust one another. It must be trust without sight. Can you do Alma? If you cannot, or will not, then I resign all other plans, and submit myself to father's will; and if I am not happy in my position, yet I shall be happy with you, Alma. dear Alma, decide shortly."

Alma was not long in determining how she would decide. She did not intend to be surprised in nobleness of mind by Rudolf; and she would not have accepted from him the sacrifice of her dearest wishes. She declared her decision in the words of Thekla, in Schiller's "Wallenstein".

"Is it possible that that can be the right
The which thy tender heart did not at first
Detect and seize with instant impulse? Go,
Fulfil thy duty! I should ever love thee,
Whate'er thou had'st chosen; thou would'st still have
Nobly and worthy of thee."

And then, as to proving faithful to him: Alma thought would be the easiest thing in the world—and so natural, so beautiful. She would rebuff all rich, proud wooers, and keep herself for the poor obscure one, till he should some day come like the prince in the fairy tales—she would knock at her gate and lead her away to happiness.

But Alma had other feelings besides these *and* generous ones. There are few natural feelings elevated but that there may yet lurk in the

most hearts—almost unconsciously to themselves, and all unknown to others—some secondary and less noble motives which yet exercise a silent but powerful influence on the imagination and conduct. Nothing seemed more insufferably dreary to Alma than the idea of being compelled to spend her whole life in her native valley. Her longings were for a far different life—something which should be new and strange; and then floated before her mental vision, though she was scarcely conscious of it, the image of a very eminent physician whom she had met at a neighbouring bathing-place the year before. She recalled to her mind the great attention and respect paid to him by high and low; that even the society of his wife had been courted, and all imaginable consideration shown for her. She remembered, too, that the princess of the little neighbouring state drove into the town occasionally to make a call on the lady, and that a count from some place or other had offered his carriage for the doctor's use. Why should not Rudolf be able to succeed thus? And if he did so, it would all be owing to her decision.

These were indeed the after-thoughts of Alma's mind. In her higher moods, and amid her nobler and sublimer dreams of the future, she cared nothing for wealth, or rank, or appearance. She wished only to act nobly towards the man she loved; to requite his affection with her own; and *she would willingly have sacrificed splendour and fortune, and the pleasures of youth for his sake.*

Nor were these latter feelings either false or feigned ; though which of the two classes of sentiment had the more vitality remains to be decided. There is one Power only which brings into perfect truth and consistency all the diverse thoughts of man, and breaks down all walls of division in the heart, making it a pure and holy temple, through which the words, "Thy will be done," go sounding ever, the key-note of all its music.

Alma's letter, in which she exhorted Rudolf to follow his inmost yearnings, and promised to prove faithful to him, was the last letter which passed between them for a long, long time. From this period, her life moved on in the old track, and at first it seemed an infinite blank. She missed Rudolf in every spot around her. She had indeed seen him but seldom ; yet, now that there were no hopes of his return, the first week of absence seemed like an eternity. Gradually, however, the old love of life re-awakened, and she received and paid visits as usual. She indeed conducted herself, for so young a girl, with much gravity and reserve in all her intercourse with young men. But this sedateness did not last long. "Fidelity does not depend on this sort of thing," she said to herself ; and she soon became nearly as merry, happy, and free from anxiety as before. She thought often and much of Rudolf—sometimes in the throng of company, when in all her comparisons he was sure to remain unrivalled—oftener still in the solitudes of the  and in quiet evenings when she mused

alone. Indeed, Frau Waker, who was very fond of him, did not let his memory slumber, and many a time sighed out—"Oh! how ever can a man thus trample his fortune under foot, just for the sake of going through the world always studying? And besides that, only see what a miserable pursuit that medical profession is, when they are obliged to cut up dead men, and after all, can't manage to cure the living ones. I pity you, dearest Alma—of course you will not hold out, and keep on waiting for him; and even if you did, why it would be better not to marry at all than make a match like that: for here you might live all your life long like a princess. That's a good proverb enough that says, 'Let well alone.' When I think what a nice man my Zwissler was, and how Herr Waker gave me nothing but good words till after I had accepted him; and how Zwissler squandered all my little property, and Waker was so greedy that he would actually help himself to potatoes out of the pot while it was on the stove; and that Zwissler went off to America, and we were separated. And then when I think of what sorrow would come to me if ever Waker came here——"

Alma would sit and listen to this wearisome, oft-told tale of sorrow with perfect composure, and it never once occurred to her that the behaviour of Herr Zwissler and Herr Waker formed two alarming warnings as to what *men* might prove on further acquaintance.

But when a year had passed over since the

sad day of parting, the young lady began to think to herself that she had remained true to Rudolf for a very long while. Louisa wrote to her very often. The poor dear girl had not gone forth to meet golden hours, and was obliged to find solace by dwelling much on those joyous days which she had spent in the wooded vale. She found her father ill, dangerously ill, and she now faithfully shared with her mother the duties of the sick-room. There was so little to relate of her monotonous life that her letters chiefly consisted of expressions of sympathy with her friend and reminiscences of the happy past. "Do you remember this? do you still think on that?" formed a part of every letter; and she would often ask—"Have you ever heard anything more of Herr Kling?" On one occasion she even ventured to write, "My father wants a new curate, and I have been thinking that Herr Kling might suit him, for you know he must have one who is a very good man; but perhaps Herr Kling is otherwise engaged by this time; and perhaps it might not be desirable to write to him, as he lives so far away, and does not know my father, so you had better say nothing about it to anybody." At length Louisa's father died, and she was left with her mother and three other children quite unprovided for.

Three years had passed since that visit in the vale, when Louisa said in a letter to Alma—"Only think, dear, I am engaged to the Coadjutor Körner, who came here during the last days of my father,

now a pastor in Hirschfeld. It was certainly grateful of me to feel for a good long time to make up my mind about accepting him, cannot help considering it an honour that he have so much confidence in me. He is a good and learned man, and he is wealthy too, and dear mother can live with us after our marriage, as my brothers will soon be leaving home. It is because I am so saddened by my dear father's death that I feel a tendency to look at life in so melancholy a light. And yet I feel that I could not do otherwise than marry Herr Körner. My dear intended is in somewhat poor health, and of a very grave turn of mind, and he needs a wife who will make it her duty to take good care of him. Pray for dear Alma, that I may be able rightly to fulfil my duties. Write and tell me how all is going on at home, and if your cousin has not by this time completed his studies. May God help you, dear mother, and enable you to marry according to dear father's desire, for this indeed is the greatest blessing; not that I doubt that I too shall be

I quite believe that I shall be. My dear father sends you all kind wishes.

"Your faithful LOUISA."

At the time she did not even ask after Herr Kling. He gently shook her head at this letter, and answered forth—

*"Must all then come to sorrow
That youth believes and hopes?"*

MEETING AGAIN.

At the entrance of a small town a few miles distant from Steinthal, the celebrated bathing-place, there stands a dwelling, so pleasant in itself, and in the midst of a landscape so lovely, that it attracts the notice of every passer-by. The wooden balcony was, at the time of which we are writing, wreathed about, according to Swiss fashion, with green luxuriant climbing plants. The most rare and beautiful shrubs and flowers adorned the garden, in the midst of which stood so delightful a summer arbour that it seemed to invite one to repose under the soft shadow. Everything indeed about this house told of quiet seclusion; and the only sign of human life was that of an elderly woman, who was sitting on the seat under some lime-trees which shaded the house, where she was cutting some vegetables.

Looking out on the landscape from this pretty dwelling, one might see the chief hotel of the little town, in front of which an elegant carriage was now standing. An equally elegant though somewhat formal-looking gentleman, in the prime of life, alighted from the carriage, and preceded by a boy who was showing the way, walked up to the pleasant villa.

"My son is at home," said the old lady, in reply to his inquiry after the doctor, and immediately the doctor, a young and handsome man,

presented himself to the stranger as the master of the house.

"I am told," said the gentleman, "that you occasionally let some of the rooms of your house, as a summer residence for invalids. I was, just at this time, on the point of going farther up with my wife, who has long been ill, and is suffering from a cough, to the baths of Steinthal; but on the way she took a little whim into her head, and fancied that she would rather enjoy a few weeks in a quiet retired country house. It is only a little bit of caprice," he added, for up to this time, notwithstanding her invalid condition, she has gone to balls and evening parties, and has visited the theatre, and made the most fatiguing journeys, but you, who are a physician, know what women are. It is the best way to yield, so she may if she likes try quiet and solitude. Are your rooms disengaged?"

"Yes; and your lady can look at them," said the doctor.

"Very good, I will at once send her here then," replied the stranger. "She can then make what arrangements she pleases. I must go and have some conversation with the hotel-keeper respecting the races which are to take place to-day. Can you give me any information about them?"

"I am sorry that I cannot tell you anything concerning them," said the doctor, and with a formal bow, Herr Bauer departed by the way he

The lady thus announced soon made her appearance, walking slowly down the street, and attired in a handsometravelling dress. The doctor advanced to meet her, and give her his arm. She put aside her black veil, and looked suddenly at him, while a quick blush spread itself over all her features. It was Alma; she had recognised Rudolf sooner than he had known her, and thus they met again.

Rudolf led the apparently exhausted lady into the summer-house of the little garden. His mother, very much surprised at seeing them enter, soon went to fetch some refreshments. Once more they sat together amidst the sweet-scented flowers, beneath the trees now gently stirred by the passing of a slight breath of wind. All was beauty, all was peace, yet neither for a time uttered a word.

"Have you lived here long, Rudolf?" Alma at length asked. "I heard that you had gone abroad."

"After I had finished my studies," he replied, "I accompanied the Russian Prince Niemirow to Russia. I had made his acquaintance at the University, and he wished for my company and medical services, and offered me in return the means for further improvement. I wrote to you, Alma, before my departure, and received back my letter unopened. In the course of the last three years I lost my dear young prince by death, and I came back to my own country, having been liberally remunerated by his parents. I then settled down here, where, though the town itself is small, the very populous neighbourhood opens to me a fine

sphere of activity. A year since I wrote and informed your father that I was now established in a good practice. I wrote again to you, Alma, telling you that I had made my home in a quiet little town, where you could see kindly faces as often as you chose; that I had a house in a green wood, with a balcony, and a little garden, such as one day when in the wood we had pictured to ourselves. My letter was sent back by your father, with the intelligence that you had married Herr Bauer, the future owner of the Foundry, and that you were then making a tour through Austria and Italy."

Alma had buried her face in her hands while Rudolf was speaking, and when she looked up, the inexpressibly bitter woe which was written on her features would at once have disarmed him, even if he had borne any ill-will towards her.

"Alma," he said, offering her his hand, "He who knows my heart knows that I do not reproach you, and do not blame you. Let us both believe that it was not to be. Let us take events from God's hand. I have an excellent practice, and am able to offer my mother a home. You are in a position in which you may prove a great blessing to others.

Frau Mainhard now returned with wine, raspberry syrup and rolls. She had in former days very seldom *seen her beautiful and highly-accomplished niece, and had been almost a stranger to her.*

"Some patients are making very urgent inquiries about you, Rudolf," she said, quickly. "And there is a servant here who is asking if Frau Bauer will decide at once to come here, as Herr Bauer wishes to proceed immediately if she should not remain."

"I am coming," said Alma, rising languidly.

Both she and Rudolf at once understood, without a word, that she would not remain in his house. They parted, and Rudolf stood looking after her long and sorrowfully. Once she turned her head; was it to look at the charming house? was it to look at him? But she turned it but once.

A few days had gone by since this meeting. This summer was an especially gay one at the Springs of Steinthal, and the baths presented a very stirring scene. The rich and fashionable showed a very hearty appreciation of the improvements and beautifying which had of late transformed the once quiet valley into a charming summer visiting-place. Instead of a few spots, where, in former times, might be seen, here and there, a little group of invalids, there was now a grand promenade, crowded with bright garments and elegant figures; while loud exciting music sounded from the lofty windows of the newly-built ball-room. Not far from the hotel two persons were sitting on a soft mossy seat, hidden among thick bushes. They seemed to have nothing to do with all this gaiety and splendour. The lady was still young and blooming, but her face bore

traces of a sorrow endured in quiet patience; the gentleman at her side sat motionless with his head bowed down, unobservant of the lovely neighbourhood and caring only for the gentle cheering words of his companion. He seemed as if in a dream, while she, in her turn, soon became silent, and sat with secret heart-ache listening to the merry music that was now guiding the movements of the dancers.

A lady of singular beauty was advancing with trembling steps down the path, and the young lady, who saw that the stranger was ill, immediately rose to offer her her seat. The lady had scarcely reached the place, when she fell back almost fainting, till a violent fit of coughing again roused her. The young lady busied herself in showing her all care and attention, but the invalid, who scarcely raised her head, yet seemed restless and troubled at the presence of strangers.

"James," said the younger lady to a neatly-dressed peasant boy, who was standing in the avenue, "go with your master to his room. I will soon come to you, dearest," she said softly to the gentleman, while kissing his forehead, as a mother would do that of a sick child, and then she returned to the suffering lady.

The lady was now sitting up, and was looking with a sad glance at the advancing stranger.

The pastor's wife with much emotion took her hand, and said, "Alma, is it you? Can it possibly be you? Ah, who could have believed that after

so long, long a time we should meet again—and thus?” She burst into tears.

Alma did not weep, but she said earnestly, “And you are really Louisa, my little Louisa? I should not have known you, you have grown so tall. Poor dear friend, then that was your husband. It seems that his sufferings must have increased.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Louisa, sorrowfully; “oh, we have, indeed, much sorrow to bear. You and I are almost like strangers to each other now, Alma. It is long since you wrote to me.”

“Yes, that is true,” said Alma, blushing; “it is my fault. I have felt so little inclination for letter-writing.”

At this moment Herr Bauer, in his elegant attire, and with his stately manner, came forward from the house. Alma rose immediately. “They are looking after me,” she said. “Shall you remain long at the baths, dear Louisa?”

“I think not,” answered the pastor’s wife; “the noise here, and even the bathing, seems to have an unfavourable effect on my husband.”

“Can you not come to my room this evening?” said Alma; “my husband will have gone for his game at billiards. Tell me your number and I will send our servant to bring you. Herr Bauer, my husband,” she added, as the gentleman came near. “My young friend, and wife of Herr Körner, pastor of Bergstetten.”

Herr Bauer made a formal bow, and Louisa prepared to depart.

“Farewell, Alma.”

“Adieu,” she replied, “till we meet again;” and the words “meet again” shot through her heart a painful remembrance at the moment of their utterance.

The two friends sat in the evening in one of the grandest rooms of the hotel, and in a boudoir of Frau Bauer’s. Alma was dressed in the most charming *négligée* of the season, and Louisa was attired in a simple black silk dress, for the pastor’s wife wore no ornaments. It was no longer the joyous, light-hearted Louisa, with round cheeks, and the laughing eyes, who sat there; neither, on the other hand, was it the timid, shy child who was continually asking, “Alma, is it proper to do this, or is that becoming?” and “What would you do now if you were in my place, Alma?” She had not had the opportunity of learning the airs and graces of fashionable society; but the stern discipline of sorrow had raised her far above mere conventional usages, and she walked her way in so serene and straightforward a manner that she was little moved by what others might think of her. Alma, the highly-accomplished lady, felt herself almost embarrassed in the presence of the simple-hearted friend of her youth. But Louisa’s whole heart was put into the question of “Alma, how are you going on, are you happy?” and her earnest tones unlocked the heart which for a long time had withheld all confidences, and rejected all sympathy.

“You did not think, ten years ago,” said Alma,

in melancholy accents, "that you would meet me again bearing a name unknown to you."

"Certainly not," said Louisa; "oh, who could have supposed it? Your path seemed so secure, so smooth, and I felt so confident that you and——"

"And Rudolf; you may speak out," said Alma. "I used to feel sure too, that it would be so. You know all about that time, and how my father entirely and for ever broke off all intimacy with Rudolf, and forbade any farther intercourse with him. Oh, it is not so easy to prove faithful to the absent when everybody opposes it, though I used to think it was. But it became more difficult every year. Frau Waker, who was so captivated with Rudolf, and with whom I could always talk of him, went away one fine morning with Herr Waker, who suddenly emerged from some place abroad, and who wished to take her back again, so I was left quite alone, and oh, it was such a dreary time; and wooers kept coming as if my father had offered me for sale."

"And I suppose you were forced into making some decision," said Louisa, with deep sympathy.

"No, not exactly that," said Alma, colouring; "but my position was a very painful one. I, who had always been the petted child, was now watched in my own home, and treated almost like a prisoner. I neither saw nor heard anything of Rudolf, and there was not the smallest hope of my father's relenting; there was no prospect whatever for us. At last I decided to accept my present husband."



ALMA AND LOUISA.



was the one whom my father was most pleased with, for in his eyes the ancient aristocratic rank of his family was very important, though I attach no value whatever to it. He took a good deal of interest too in the iron-works, though he did not understand them as well as my father did."

"Is your father living?" said Louisa.

"No; he died suddenly last year of apoplexy," said Alma, in the same weary, apathetic manner in which she usually spoke.

"And you are really happy now?" inquired Louisa, with a somewhat misgiving look, as she saw the burning red spot on Alma's cheek, and the unnatural brightness of her eyes.

"Oh, certainly," said Alma, carelessly; "Alfred is very kind, he does all he can to give me pleasure. We have taken several delightful journeys, and when I became ill he gave me my choice of any of the baths in the country."

"But do you nurse and take proper care of yourself, dear Alma?" said her friend. "Is not this life of excitement injurious to you? Everything here is so loud and noisy, and you used formerly so to long for quiet."

"My taste has quite changed since those days," said Alma, with a laugh which saddened Louisa. "I could not endure still life, and I like noise and bustle, and I am glad to exchange the perpetual solitude of our valley for a more musical and varied commotion."

"Ah, but your health, dear Alma."

"Oh!" said Alma, again laughing, "there is no danger of that. People do not die so easily as we used to imagine they did when we were young. And besides, of what value is my life? I have no children, and there is no one being in the world to whom I am indispensably necessary;" and she burst into bitter tears.

Louisa bent softly over her; she forgot the griefs of her own heart in her deep sympathy with her poor friend, who was evidently counting her life as worthless because her early hopes had deceived her.

After a pause Alma rose, wiped away her tears, and said, "Now Louisa, tell me how you have gone on all this time. You can have no very joyous story to relate."

"There is little to be told," replied Louisa. "You know already that even before our marriage my husband suffered a good deal. A nervous disorder which came on since has aggravated his natural gloominess into the most touching condition of melancholy apathy, with which for five long years all the skill of physicians, and all that my love and care can do, have contended in vain. Oh, Alma, what sad hours I have experienced! Often when morning has dawned I could not imagine how I was to get through the day; and when in the night his speechless melancholy expressed itself in weary tossings to and fro, it was so painful that I longed again for the morning. You know, Alma, how I once used to say that my house was *too quiet* for me, and that I longed for more life

and excitement ; but since then I have often felt as if the stillness of death were around me. Much as my husband had really loved me, he now accepted all my affection and care with dull indifference. I had not even the comfort of feeling that my presence did him any good. As long as he possibly could, he took all the duty of the parish himself, but after a time it became necessary for him to have an assistant, and when the curate arrived he proved to be Hermann Kling ; you remember, Alma, the companion of Rudolf in those happy days. I knew him in an instant, but he did not remember me. No wonder. Eight years of sorrow and anxiety had made me many, many years older. He was a great help and comfort to me, and seemed to have a deep though silent sympathy with me in my sorrow, but I never found courage to tell him that we had met before. Yet I could not help thinking a good deal of those old days ; and one morning very early when I went to sit in the summer-house, I took out with me the old album, and read over the words of 'The Dreams of Youth,' which he once wrote out for me. I was suddenly called away, and when I came back, the curate was sitting there with an open page before him. As I entered he started, and said, 'Are you then that Louisa?' Ah, indeed I was, and we forgot the many long sorrowful years which had passed, and talked of those old times as if we were once more children. We had neither of us forgotten a single thing that occurred ; and at last he told me gently that he

had so often thought of those times, and had so much wished to see me again; but that he had never been so fortunate as to be led in any way into the neighbourhood where I lived. He was poor, and without any prospects in life, so he had never ventured to seek me out, and that for some years past he had been living abroad as a private tutor. He looked very sad as he said all this. As I walked through the garden back to the house, I felt as if I had awakened from an oppressive dream, and for the first time for long years I felt some sympathy with the singing birds and took a pleasure in looking at the blooming flowers. But it afterwards seemed to me as if the quiet of my soul and the uncomplaining devotion of the last years was disturbed. My heart beat loud and fast, and was longing for its share of happiness, and youth, and joy of life. All seemed tumult within. There happened that morning to be a wedding after the conclusion of the morning service. This excited my attention, and I listened more earnestly than usual to the words which I had heard so often during the celebration of the holy rite. It seemed to me as if a voice sounded to me from heaven, when at the consecration of the marriage there fell on my ears the solemn question, 'Wilt thou, forsaking all others, keep only to him so long as ye both shall live?' To this question I too had once answered fully, and without any mental reservation, and God had heard my answer; and the *inward* commotion of my heart was stilled. I



knew well what I ought to do, but alas ! I did not desire it, and it was but as if a voice from Sinai, and not the preaching of the happy, blessed Gospel, had come to me.

“Hermann and I conversed no more on the few following days ; we avoided each other, and he seemed as if striving to forget the painful thoughts and remembrances which had been awakened. My husband often sat between us, mute and motionless. Have you ever carefully read in the Bible, Alma, that mysterious narrative of the night in which Jacob wrestled with the Lord till the dawn of day ? Such a night have I struggled through, and I never ceased earnestly striving, with the words upon my lips, ‘ Lord, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me ; ’ and I have not striven in vain. Day broke, and the light seemed to me holier and purer than ever, and I could say with my whole heart, ‘ I have seen the Lord, and my soul is satisfied. ’ I went to my husband’s couch ; he usually, towards morning, fell into a quiet sleep. The clear gray light of dawn played on his pale, suffering features ; a deeper sympathy than ever, a feeling of penitence, and with it a love purer and deeper than even that of our first short period of happiness, took possession of my heart. It was God’s blessing, and it came to me from my night of conflict and prayer. I felt now that I could ever devote my all, my life to Him—and, without a word, a sacred, though speechless promise ascended to heaven.



"When next day I met the curate at the breakfast-table my eye was calm, and my soul was tranquil as my eye met his; but he looked somewhat anxious and disturbed. My husband sat in his easy-chair indifferent to all around, when Hermann stepped up to me, and said in a low and rather hesitating tone, 'You will not misunderstand my motives, Frau Körner, if I seek another curacy. I think it would be better for me to do so.' 'Perhaps so,' I said, kindly; 'and may God guide and prepare you for a happy and useful future.' I felt that from this time I could have remained quite tranquilly and happily in his society, but I wished him to act according to the dictates of his conscience. We have not seen each other since he went away from us.

"From that period God has enabled me to undertake my duty with fresher and firmer feelings. I had never, indeed, neglected it; but I can now wake with a trustful and cheerful heart when the morning dawns upon me, and during nights which are long and trying a light from above falls on my spirit. My husband's condition has improved but little, except that his indifference towards me has given place to a most touching affectionateness, which, however, is rather the dependent love of the helpless child for its mother than the strong protecting love of the husband for his wife. But you need never pity me again, dear Alma. May God give to you in your brilliant career all the *peace, all the hope, which brightens my quiet days.*"

An expression of bitter grief passed over Alma's beautiful features. "I believe that a spirit of resignation like yours is more likely to be found in retirement than in an exciting life like mine," she said, at last. "But we are so much abroad, we travel so much, and when we are at home we keep quite an open house, so I have very little time for reflection ; and besides, I find it best not to dwell too much upon the past. But indeed I have no cause to complain. Good night, Louisa," said she suddenly, and bursting into tears she buried her face for a long time in the bosom of her friend, till Louisa gently released herself and hastened to her invalid husband. When, in the course of the following day, Louisa was compelled by a restless fit of her husband to quit the baths, Frau Bauer was not to be found ; she had gone on an excursion to the mountains with a large party of ladies and gentlemen who were visiting the baths.

* * * *

Three years had passed since this night of meeting. The golden springtime was brightening the old wooded vale, which to-day lay for the first time during many years in stillness—perfect stillness. All the wheels were silent, all the hammers were stopped, and the toiling workmen loitered about in their Sunday clothes in front of the houses. And then, through the quiet depths of the wood, there came sounding from far and near all the church bells from the heights and from the valley. *The workmen formed themselves into a*

procession, and amid the sound of the subdued, dirge-like music, a richly-decorated coffin was borne through the valley up to the churchyard of the next village. The lady was to-day carried to her grave. The child of these woods—she who in her girlhood had been the pride and joy of the people here—had during the last few years, as the wife of their owner, become almost as a stranger to them. The churchyard, lying high above the softly-undulating hills, looking freely out upon the open country, had no attractions for the numerous escort who were making their way thither, for the young, fair, happy, and bright lady had left touching memories in many a heart there. “Who that saw her lately so gay and brilliant,” said one, “would have thought her end so near?” “She has danced herself to death,” said another. “She could never have enough of balls and travelling about, and taking pleasure. Her husband was only too indulgent to her.” “Ah, well! the rich must die, it seems, as well as the poor,” muttered the sickly wife of a woodcutter. But all laments and remarks were silenced when the impressive words of the young clergyman who had attended the deceased in her last hours were now uttered above her grave.

The deeply afflicted widower of the lovely lady was not satisfied with the funeral oration, which rather set forth the deep solemnity of death itself than the excellences of the departed one; and the prayer of the clergyman, in which he uttered a

hope in the eternal mercy of Him who accepts the latest sigh, and will not send away the labourer, even at the eleventh hour, he regarded almost as an offence.

The singing ceased, the procession dispersed, and the clergyman and a young man, who had been among the foremost of the mourners, offered their hands to each other beside the grave which the sexton was beginning to fill. They were Hermann Kling and Rudolf Mainhard, who after long years of separation here met again.

But few words passed between the young men. Rudolf's soul was too deeply, too painfully moved for many words; excepting in one short and sad interview, he had not seen the beloved of his youth till to-day, when she lay in her coffin. But they spoke of the departed, of her girlish days, of the restless dissipation of her later life, and of the hard conflict of her last days, when at length she had for the first time turned the ever-unsatisfied longings of her heart towards the true eternal rest.

Rudolf and Hermann were walking slowly away from the grave, just now closed, when a young lady in mourning entered the churchyard.

"You have come too late," said the sexton in a careless manner, as he collected his implements together and walked away.

The lady knelt down weeping beside the newly-closed tomb, on which she had laid a bunch of roses. She did not look at the two friends who remained standing near; but Hermann thought

that he recognised her. She stayed there some time, weeping and praying, when a tall and somewhat emaciated man came up the hill, stepped softly behind the weeping lady, and gently raised her up. She looked up at him affectionately, threw her arm round him, and leaned her head on his breast like a wearied child.

The two friends, who now began to understand all the circumstances, advanced nearer.

"Allow me, Frau Körner, to reintroduce two old acquaintances," said Rudolf.

Louisa (the parson's wife) looked attentively at him, and, before she had seen Hermann, she said, turning to Rudolf, and smiling and blushing amidst her tears, "Ah! Rudolf Mainhard, is it you?"

"And it is I, also," said Hermann, coming nearer, and warmly offering his hand. "I heartily rejoice to see you both again well and happy."

"Oh, yes!" said Louisa, with deep feeling, "I do indeed thank God for it. My husband wrote himself and told you, did he not? how well he was, and how wonderfully the sea-bathing had restored his health."

"And I need not, cannot tell you what an angel accompanied and succoured me through all those long times of sorrow," added the parson, smiling at his wife, as he stood by her side a fine, tall man, in whom, except that he was very thin and pale, one could trace no signs of former suffering.

"But our poor Alma! How singular that just at that time you were led again into her neigh-

bourhood," said Louisa, who with some self-reproach felt that in the fulness of her recovered happiness she had for a moment forgotten her friend. "You must tell me all about her."

"I bid you all hearty welcome to my house," said the clergyman. "My wife will be so delighted to know you, dear Frau Körner, and you will soon learn to love her."

For one moment more Louisa stooped down over Alma's grave, then leaning on her husband's arm she followed the others, and the dead remained alone.

Now, at length, all was still around her—quite still !

V.

The Good Granny.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.

"The heart of her husband can safely trust in her.

"She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.

"She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."—Prov. xxxi. 10, 11, 12, 16.

FRAU MUNTER was certainly, in the sense of the Scripture passage I have quoted, a virtuous woman, though it is whispered that, with all love and respect, she very well understood how, now and then, to make her own will pass current for her lord's. For all that, however, neither her husband nor her house was ill-cared for; her will was not capricious. It was a kindly will, bent not on her own comfort, but on the welfare of those who belonged to her.

The good granny—for by this name she yet lives in the memory of her family—had been in her young days a very blooming and beautiful woman. She was one of a respectable and wealthy family. Her husband was a tradesman in a small town; and it might have been thought that she would have regarded herself as far above the humble duties of weighing out snuff day by day, and measuring greasy oil. She, however, did not think

so; she considered it no dishonour to do anything that seemed to need doing; and she busied herself among the herring casks and cheeses of her shop with the same cheerful temper, and the same pleasant manners, with which she would have presided at a table of ambassadors, had her husband chanced to have been prime minister.

Rarely, however, has even a minister's wife so extensive a sphere of action, or so many opportunities of doing good and showing kindness, as Frau Munter had behind her counter. People's hearts warmed to her when they saw the fair and kindly dame in her shop, where she had always a sweetmeat ready for every child, and a kind word or suitable counsel for the older folk. No father confessor ever had to bear in his heart such numerous and varied human anxieties as she. Conjugal differences, love sorrows, parents' sighs and children's complaints, the cares of poverty and the worries of riches, were poured forth into her sympathizing heart, which could find room for them all, and give to each sufferer a consoling and kind reply.

Perhaps in the morning there would come in a woman for a little packet of chicory.

"I can have no more coffee," she would say; "my husband leaves no money for that. He looks upon it only as a luxury; and yet one cup of coffee often does me more good than any amount of soup. *But he begrudges me any little enjoyment.*"

"Oh, don't say so, good neighbour," Frau

Munter would reply. "All men have their peculiarities: it is the same with my husband; if he hears the sound of pounding in a mortar, he thinks the housekeeping is going to ruin with the cakes and bakings; but he does not mean any harm. You have an industrious husband, and may be pretty well satisfied with him."

"Well, that's true," said the woman, a little appeased. "He is no ragamuffin, like the joiner over the way, where, what with his dram-drinking and her perpetual coffee-drinking, there will soon be little left for either to swallow."

Towards evening the accused spouse would come in to fetch his little packet of tobacco.

"Not a few ounces of coffee, too, neighbour, for the wife, as to-morrow is Sunday?" asked the worthy shopkeeper.

"No, indeed," answered the man; "I intend giving up buying coffee for the womankind—they so overdo things."

"Ah, no, neighbour!" the good granny would say; "a cup of good coffee is more nourishing than soup, when we only take it now and then for a treat. Your wife has never made a trouble of your daily pipe."

"Oh, I should think not, indeed," he answered; "that I've a right to. That's quite another thing."

"Not quite; one is soon satisfied with coffee, but there seems no end to smoking," she would laughingly reply.

"Yes, but I have to earn the money," said her

neighbour ; "and my smoking is nothing to any one."

"Ah, but the wife takes care of what the husband earns, and so deserves her little cup of coffee," said Frau Munter. "You are not so hard-hearted as you pretend to be, neighbour ; you will carry her home some coffee ; she has such bad nights with the children, and yet she keeps up her good temper and brave heart, and does not indulge in secret dainties, as some women do."

"Ah, well, you women all know how to help one another," said the mason, good-humouredly. "Weigh it out, neighbour ; you seem to understand all about it."

Frau Munter smiled with hearty pleasure next morning when she saw the mason and his wife walking together most lovingly to church ; and the mason's wife declared to the end of her days that she had been so delighted to think that her husband had, of his own accord, and without a hint from her, brought her a packet of coffee, that from that day there was nothing on earth she would not have done for him.

Many far more serious dissensions Frau Munter had contrived to soften and finally reconcile by her winning ways, her frank heart, and liberal hand, and by her wise, quiet insight into the relationships of life. The clergyman of the parish little knew what an efficient helper he had in the unpretending woman who seldom went beyond the limits of her *house and shop*. Yet her shop was

not the only scene of Frau Munter's labours. Home and children were carefully attended to, and of the latter by degrees a pretty little group grew around her. A kind and faithful mother she was to the apprentices, while above all she was not only an active helpmate to her husband in business, but a loving and affectionate housewife, who kept to herself the misdoings of the maids, and forbore arguments when her husband declared he was quite certain his assertion was right.

Master Munter resembled his wife in her kind-heartedness, but not in her unwearied activity and promptness; neither had he her decision of character nor her readiness to do all that was needful, at the sacrifice even of personal ease and comfort. During the first year of their married life they had mostly spent their evenings together in the little parlour behind the shop, and the wife related to her husband—who had been chiefly occupied with the business of the counting-house—all that had happened to her during the day. On fine evenings, after the shop was closed, they usually took a walk together; after which they looked over their daily accounts—among which, to be sure, were many little unreckoned items which the wife had invested with a faithful Paymaster, though He does not reckon after the manner of men; they then read prayers with the maid and apprentices, and retired peacefully to rest.

But when, one after another, children were added to the household, the evenings were inter-

rupted, and the wife could no longer devote herself exclusively to her husband. He found his home rendered now and then uncomfortable by her necessary attention to her babes, and the one evening in the week on which he had been used to go out and take a glass with his neighbours gradually increased to two or three, so that the mother had to take care to get the children off to bed before their father came into his home, as sometimes the more than mere good humour which he brought in with him would have astonished the little ones. The wife saw with concern this growing inclination to conviviality; she prepared dishes which she knew her husband liked best for his supper, and taught the children little stories to relate to him, and strove by all possible means to amuse him, but all in vain; the fish would get cold, and the children become sleepy, and yet the father had not come home.

"But now, that's a dear fellow, do stay at home this one evening," said the wife on one occasion; "it is our dear little Trotty's birthday."

"I can't, my dear," was his reply; "mine host of the Bear will be sadly offended if I do, and as you very well know, he buys all his cheeses of us."

"But surely you can go there on Friday."

"That's my day for going to the Lamb; and the landlord of the Lamb would never forget it, *if I did not go*," said Master Munter; "and you *know he is our very best customer.*"

"Well, at any rate you will go for a walk with us on Saturday?" said his wife.

"But what would the master of the Eagle say? One might as well turn the exciseman out of doors as drive away good customers," he answered.

"Oh, well then, let customers go," said the wife, who for once lost all patience. "A father is more to his children than two or three innkeepers more or less can be to us; and, after all, you spend more money with them than they ever bring to you."

"That is a matter beyond your woman's comprehension," said her husband, with great dignity. "You women only see just what lies before you. Good fellowship helps on a man of business. It is not only the landlord one has to think of, but there's one man takes a pinch of snuff or smokes a pipe, and says—'Heyday! what capital tobacco!' 'Yes, it is light Pororico, at fourpence a packet; or Doppelnopp's first quality,' I remark, and so one word brings on another. Yes, you never think while you stay quietly behind the counter, and only get up now and then to serve a customer, what a deal of pains I have taken about the matter on the evening before, at the tavern. Now, don't you think it would be much easier for me to sit on the sofa at home, and read my newspaper, than to put on my boots again in the evening, and go out even in the rain? But a father of a family must not think of that. As Schiller has truly said, '*Man must go forth into the labour of life.*'"

Yes," he added, in the most fatherly way, while putting on his coat, "do you send off the little ones to bed, count over the cheeses, have fresh water poured over the stockfish, and make everything comfortable at home, and leave me to look out for your future welfare." And in a complacent conviction of this self-sacrifice and fatherly care, he walked off to the Bear, leaving his wife looking after him with a heavy heart.

Every Sunday morning Master Munter went with his wife and the apprentices to church. After the service, however, there was always something which he felt obliged to go and talk over with some acquaintances of the landlord at whichever inn his fatherly duties seemed, on that particular day, to demand his presence. The wife took charge of the home, and in the quiet intervals of the day read the Bible with the children, or sat and watched them as they walked about the yard. As she had much to occupy her, she only allowed herself the single hour between the service and the catechizing for taking a quiet stroll. One Sunday she wandered on, in deep thought, praying to God that He would show her a way by which she might win back her husband, who was, in all but one respect, so good and kind, from the dangerous path which was leading him the downward way from domestic happiness and prosperity. It suddenly occurred to her remembrance, that during the first year after her marriage her husband often said that the greatest

wish he had was to have a garden of his own. Even when a boy, he had turned a back yard into a little garden, and studied a number of old garden books which had been bought for waste paper. She had at that time rather opposed this wish of his, chiefly because she was desirous of becoming familiar with the duties of business, which were so new to her, before she undertook any further occupation. Afterwards, she had had enough to do in nursing and taking care of the children, and had thought no more about flowers and fruits. The question now, however, came into her mind, "Why not buy a garden in which my husband would take a delight?" "But where shall I find one?" was her next thought, as she walked after the children, scarcely knowing whither. "Just opposite the Upper Gate is a nice garden for sale—just the thing; but then to reach it, one must go by the Eagle, and he would never go past that on his way home without looking in. Then there are those beautiful orchards, just by the Lower Gate; but there the Bear stretches forth his paws. On the high road there lies the Lamb to the right, and to the left the Lion: there is a monster everywhere."

Meanwhile, the little party had reached the churchyard, which was always a favourite walk of the children, because they loved to look at the crosses and the grave-stones. Herr Munter's parents lay buried here, and the wife held their *graves in great respect*. As she looked over the

low wall of the churchyard, her glance fell on a somewhat neglected piece of garden ground, the fine rich soil of which seemed worthy of better cultivation. It occurred to her that this garden was one which was for sale out of a trust-property, and the thought, "Why not buy that?" came into her mind as if it had been a whisper from heaven. To the astonishment of the children, she turned straight about and led them off home. She lost no time next morning in applying to the attorney who had to manage the sale.

"The price of the ground is moderate, on account of the disagreeable situation," said the seller.

Ah, it was pleasant enough to Frau Munter. There was a most beautiful prospect all around it, and the neighbourhood of the quiet dead brought no disturbing thoughts to her.

The mother entered her own home, thinking little of aught else than the piece of land, and as soon as she could find a spare moment, she took an old black box out of the deepest recesses of her wardrobe, and locking the door of the upper room, counted out the rich contents of the box on the table. There was a good sum in silver, besides some beautiful and rare gold coins, the present of a rich godmother, all which Frau Munter now reckoned up with a delight which she never before had felt for mere money. "It will do nicely," she said, smiling to herself; "and after the purchase of the property I shall still have a



little left for building a summer-house. May God give His blessing to it!"

It would seem surprising that so kind-hearted and liberal a woman had contrived to hoard a large sum like this; but the money had been given to the good wife by her mother, on quitting her early home, and was to be reserved for any special necessity. She had been compelled to make a solemn promise that she would never spend it save for some emergency. As she had of late years seen her husband's increasing inclination for expensive habits, she had also from time to time added to her treasure by small savings, in order to provide for the education of the children. "Here is a real necessity," said she to herself. "I can do nothing better for my children than to win their father back to them." She counted out the needful sum, and having carefully locked up the remainder, went off straight to the lawyer, and received the key of the garden from him, making him promise to keep her secret for a time.

She soon found a good opportunity for leading her husband into his new property. Tuesday was the anniversary of his mother's death, when husband and wife always went together to visit the churchyard; and as this was the season when field labour was going on busily, the shop was less frequented than usual, so that they could leave it to the care of the apprentices.

The children, who suspected nothing, went joyously skipping onwards. Herr Munter had of late

been so little in the habit of walking out with his wife, that he was very near making an excuse to avoid it now, and he began considering in his mind whether they should be back in time for him to reach the Lion. They came to the grandmother's grave, and the children laid their wreaths and little nosegays upon it. Then Master Munter began telling his wife various narratives which she had heard before a hundred times, but to which she ever loved to listen—stories of his dear mother, now passed away from this world—and all those little household memories which, as they returned, always softened the heart of the yet loving son. As they came away from the grave, he looked into the garden, as his wife had done on the Sunday. The grass plot was gloriously green, and the trees full of blossoms.

"What a lovely place that is!" said Master Munter; "but it is not in good hands."

"There must be plenty of gooseberries and currants in there!" said the children. "I wish we might go in!"

"Your father will open it for you at once," said their mother, smiling, and putting the key into his hand.

"What is all this?" said he; for he judged from his wife's countenance even more than from the key, that something particular was going on.

"The key is yours, and the garden too," said she, with a hearty kiss.

"Mine!" asked the astonished husband.

"Ours!" cried the merry little ones, rushing dancing about on the turf, and showing in their own way that they understood what it was to take possession of property as well as an English bailiff. Meanwhile, the parents wandered in great delight through all the paths; and the wife related to the husband how she had bought the garden, though the why she prudently kept to herself. His plans for its improvement were quite inexhaustible.

"The first thing of all, though," said he, "must be a summer-house where we may be able to sit out of doors in the shade."

"To be sure," said his wife; "and I have yet a little of my spare money remaining, which I have put aside for that very purpose."

This evening mine host of the Bear was clean forgotten; and next day Master Munter could scarcely wait in patience for the return of the evening hour of leisure, when he might visit his garden with a neighbour, a good workman, so that they might select the best place for the arbour. Then came various arrangements for culture, and a wondrous laying down of plans, so that not a leisure moment occurred but he was occupied with thoughts of the garden. The children, who were highly delighted with the new possession, shared in various ways in the undertaking: weeding, fetching and bringing water, and all sorts of useful and useless doings. Though now very often they got in his way, yet their father soon learned to love to *have them* with him, and began to rejoice with all

his heart in that which gave them so much pleasure.

The good wife, who had certainly, by this new acquisition, brought on herself a great increase of domestic care and work, had to take her husband's place at home, even more than ever, besides helping to manage the garden, and looking after the workmen ; but she could do this with right good will, and a glad heart, when she could see her husband roused anew to a lively enjoyment of the beauties of Nature, and happy with and in his own. Those wild beasts, "Eagle," "Lion," and "Bear," stretched out their claws and paws in vain in the autumn, when a cider was made from the fruits of their own garden—a cider which Master Munter fully believed to be far superior in excellence and wholesomeness to any beverage ever before known in that town ; and thus when winter next came round, the danger was over, for he had by that time so long left off going to the tavern that he said now "he really couldn't see the use of it."

By next summer, the little room in the garden was built, and was gay with the leaves and blossoms of its climbing plants. It became, and it remained from that time forth, the centre of all domestic joys, the theatre of all family festivals, the favourite play-place of the children, and the scene of their fondest recollections in later years.

The nearness of the garden to the grave-yard, which was generally considered so objectionable, never annoyed this happy couple. Sometimes, as

they sat joyously together in the garden, they heard the tolling of the little bell, and saw a pilgrim carried to his rest, and the mother would beckon to the children to be quiet, while their elders breathed a silent prayer ; and then followed some talk of their own departed relatives, and of bygone times, till gradually they came back to the events of every-day life. And how rich the good mother felt herself in the property which enabled her to delight so many hearts with lovely flowers, and good vegetables, and delicious fruits, all fresh from the garden. As long as she had any, everyone had some ; and the husband rejoiced too, for he had as good a will, though not so great a faculty for giving, as she had. He never found out what had been the chief motive which induced his wife, all of her own accord, to purchase this garden ; but though he was, in a general way, apt to be jealous of his authority and dignity as a husband, yet he often said to her—" Wife, this was *your* wise thought."

So loved and worked the wedded pair for many long years in peace and tranquillity ; and as the trees in the garden grew and blossomed, so the children grew and bloomed around them. On the green turf where these had gambolled in good time there came the grandchildren also ; and the sons and daughters sat by the father and mother in the summer-room, and drank the cider, which every year got better and better, and told of the *joys and sorrows* of their own households.

Herr Munter was the first who exchanged the little resting-place in the garden for the yet more peaceful one in the neighbouring churchyard. But even there his wife maintained a loving fellowship with him, and those were among her happiest hours which as she sat quietly in the garden, she could devote to sweet memories of him. Yet she still loved her home, and brought to it her unfading, vigorous mind, her unweariedly kind heart, and all the rich experience of a long life.

The good granny was a very aged woman when after a life of almost uninterrupted health, a severe illness befell her. By her wish, all her children and grandchildren were called together, and stood around the bed of the venerable dame, in silent or uttered grief; while she, serene and self-possessed, awaited her dismissal. Her youngest grandchild, a boy of twelve, seemed inconsolable. Like many another brisk mischievous boy, he was named Fritz; and did all honour to this ominous name, for he was the author of all the pranks played on the family: and he passed for a thoroughly naughty boy, to whom one gave credit for all kinds of mischief. Everyone, therefore, was greatly astonished at the deep emotion which he showed by the sick-bed of his grandmother. His mother whispered to his sister—

“Really, all our family have affectionate hearts, and it turns out to be so, even where we had so little expected it.”

The grandmother herself said with a tremulous

voice—"Ah, dear child, your grandmother will soon be gone."

"It's not *exactly* for that, granny, that I am crying," sobbed Fritz, "but you see all my brothers and sisters have had a golden guinea and a silver-clasped hymn-book given them at their confirmation, and now I shall get nothing."

The mother, who was shocked by this speech, would have sent the heartless boy out of the room for having thus, in his grandmother's last hours, thought only of paltry gold and silver; but the good granny smiled, as heartily as her weakness would allow, and said—"Now, Fritz, take comfort, you shall not be the loser. Mina," added she, to her eldest daughter, "take that key and you will see a beautiful new hymn-book lying in my drawer—this I have laid aside for Fritz, as well as a half-guinea piece."

Fritz received the present with perfect satisfaction, in total unconcern for having incurred the displeasure of the whole family; and after looking awhile at his grandmother's gift, he said, "Granny, if you get well again, and live at the same place where I am to be confirmed, shall I get anything more?"

"Never fear," said Frau Munter, smiling, while all the family were speechless with indignation; "if God spares me, your money shall be doubled; but they must certainly make a trader of you." And the good granny did recover, and the bold Fritz received, on his confirmation-day, a silver-clasped prayer-book and a half-guinea to boot.

The few years of respite yet granted to the venerable mother were very precious to her own family. The figure once so graceful, was now bent, the face was now wrinkled, though the beauty of its early bloom was recalled to those who knew her, by the face of one of her daughters; but the kind-hearted little old woman in her neat cap, with the little gold cross attached to a black velvet ribbon round her neck, was to the last a pleasant sight. And so, too, was the soft grey hair, which at eighty years of age she was carrying on to the grave.

Shortly after Fritz had been confirmed, the good granny fell asleep, thankful for the long life that had been given to her. Everybody thought she would have left behind her a larger inheritance, if the Munters had not been so liberal. But the seed which her gentle hand had scattered, tarried not long for the harvest. None who belonged to her were ever called to suffer need, and even the wealth of others, unsought by them, came upon them as it were while they slept. The garden by the churchyard is still in the possession of the family, a thriving and blooming memorial of her housewifely forethought; just as the remembrance of her past deeds of love yet lives and thrives in the hearts of her own, who speak lovingly to this day of her bright spirit, and the faithful, earnest care with which she sought for the household that real good which far outweighs all earthly gain.

VI.

The Stranger.

“We never heard the proud mouth speak
 Home-longing, of the beauteous dame;
 Only on each pale Southern cheek,
 As o’er the high-arched brow it came,
 Lay still the far-off moonlight shimmer,
 Though changed so long for our cold strand;
 While her dark eyes were glancing ever
 Home to her own bright Fatherland.”

THE STORM.

SHE was no Spaniard, that strange visitor, who once, long years ago, streamed like a meteor into the sober circle of a little town; she was a true German, though her dialect sounded somewhat different from the pleasant broad German of Swabia, and her own bright Fatherland lay not so very far away on the blue Rhine; but she came as a stranger, and as a stranger she departed.

“How did it happen that these two people ever married each other?” is no uncommon question. The sight of many a wedded pair suggests it. And when Councillor Lindenmüller made his first appearance as a public officer in the good town of Kügel-fingen, everybody said of him and his wife, “How did these two chance to come together?” Indeed, it seemed scarcely possible to avoid asking *this* question. The Councillor was a well-condi-

tioned, stout-looking man, a good way on in the fifties. If that light curly hair of his was indeed a wig, it was at any rate exceedingly well made, for it looked extremely natural. He had the air of one who was perfectly satisfied with himself and with everybody else, and he seemed always complacently playing with a bunch of seals which hung from his waistcoat pocket. The wife by his side was a handsome and still youthful figure, whose every movement was easy and graceful. A paleness, which was rather that of languor than sickness, overspread her beautiful features: the delicately-formed red lips were compressed as if they had something which they would most closely seal; and she had a wonderful pair of dark violet eyes, in which the most careless glance must have read a strange depth of sadness—an unuttered lament. The husband and wife formed indeed a most remarkable picture: he like the painted full-moon in a child's picture-book, she like the quiet moon herself, mounting high above in the dark heaven.

The High Bailiff's wife, to whom the lady paid her first visit, felt a little embarrassed in the presence of the stranger, though she was herself a woman of the world, who in her youth had resided at the capital. She strove to speak her purest German, dwelt much on the romantic situation of the town, which, however, she regretted to add, was not seated on the borders of a river, though it had in *the neighbourhood, during wet seasons, a fine waterfall that was beautiful and musical too, and she*

warmly expressed her sorrow that the new-could find no circulating library in the . . . This last was no great loss to Frau Lindenmüller for she replied that she found very little time for reading, as she had a troublesome household to manage, and a very large garden to look after. And then this remark, to the surprise of the stranger, led to a practical discourse on the soil and situation of the gardens of Kügelzingen, in which the stranger showed not only great interest but very accurate knowledge. She spoke, too, on subjects so naturally, so earnestly, that the High Bailiff's lady felt quite delighted; and yet, in conversation she accidentally met the eyes of the stranger, she became again embarrassed. Their eyes seemed to know nothing whatever of household and garden management; they seemed to see something that lay far, far hence.

Two young girls of the family soon came into the drawing-room.

"Ah! your children are about the same age as our daughters," said Frau Lindenmüller. "I will allow me to introduce them to you to-morrow."

"Have you really children as old as mine?" asked the High Bailiff's wife, greatly astonished.

"Allow me to inform you that they are my children of my first marriage, and that I have given them this charming step-mother," remarked the Councillor.

"Ah, indeed!" replied the lady; "then *have been married* before?"

"Oh yes, I had that pleasure," said the Councillor, jestingly; "there is something so charming in a wife's company that one cannot long be happy without it when once one has been accustomed to it; and should I ever again have the misfortune to become a widower, I don't know indeed——"

"That is the best compliment you can pay to your wife, I suppose," said the High Bailiff's wife, much embarrassed, and timidly looking towards the stranger, to see how she took this unfeeling want of tact.

Not even the slightest blush on the cheek, or quivering of the delicate mouth, betrayed that the lady felt herself aggrieved. She soon continued in the most gentle manner to make the conversation general till they parted with mutual satisfaction.

Similar feelings of astonishment had been awakened in every house in the town; all were more or less surprised at this ill-matched pair. People said everywhere, "This woman was never meant for this man;" yet everywhere they found her pleasant and natural, a woman, too, of domestic interests and accomplishments. But nobody quite believed in this assumption of good housewifery. And one lady said, "She just takes up the tone which she thinks suitable for this place; but for all that, it is not really in her. She is quite a stranger to our ways, I am sure."

And still more like a stranger did the Councillor's wife appear to the aristocracy of Kügel-fingen, when, on returning her visits, they saw the

newly-arrived lady in the rooms of her own house, although the whole establishment was neat, elegant, and becoming, like the houses of other public officers. There was one sitting-room with an old sofa, which had probably belonged to the first wife ; a room for company, with brown cloth furniture, and a time-piece in the form of an altar, all kept in most beautiful order, but by no means particularly elegant in themselves ; not one trace which betokened the lady of high education : no pocket library, not even a book ; no guitar ; a tolerable harpsichord, on which little Rosa and Mina, the rather coarse, red-cheeked daughters of the former marriage, took their music-lessons ; not even a flower, except those in Fraulein Jane's room. Fraulein Jane was a sister of the first wife, and a great invalid, and together with Herr Sirmeler and Herr Fritz, the clerks in the office, belonged to the Councillor's household. The wife managed the house, provided everything, and herself superintended every domestic work. She was ready to give directions to everyone, and was kind and obliging to all ; and yet—and yet, there were ever those dreamy eyes that seemed to belie all her words and actions ! By degrees, however, the family settled down into the usual order, and the lively interest which they at first inspired soon abated.

The Councillor's wife received and gave invitations in due course, and her coffee and cake were *pronounced* faultless, and the recipes for making

the latter soon travelled through the town ; she was, and she ever continued, an unassuming and very pleasing woman. The townspeople became accustomed to the idea that she and her husband really did belong to each other—the slender lily, and the full-blown marigold. Yet she was always a person of importance, and all information about the Councillor's household, which was conveyed to the neighbours by servants, children, or clerks, was received with interest. All reports agreed in this, that there never was a more industrious, circumspect, and economical housewife than Frau Matilda Lindenmüller. When other women were but just waking, she had come in from working in the garden to prepare the breakfast, which her husband would not have enjoyed from any hands but hers. She saw and took note of all that went on in the house, and thus was both feared and respected by the servants. Indeed, all family requirements were attended to so punctually and liberally that none in the house could fail to be satisfied. Herr Sirmeler and Herr Fritz never wearied of repeating how agreeable and kind she always was, how mindful of their wants, and how sympathizing in all their affairs.

Fraulein Jane added to the infirmities of old age an ill-temper, which rendered the charge of her a very painful and wearisome duty, so that the servants and hired nurses lost all patience with her. Her sister-in-law never lost hers. Every morning this graceful, noble figure might be seen bending

over the misshapen invalid, performing such services as are undertaken only by some sister of mercy. Various little acts of attention in the sick-room which others left undone were rendered by the pretty delicate hands of Frau Matilda—hands which one might fancy were made only for the piano or the embroidery frame. Certainly Fraulein Jane did not venture to utter forth all her ill-humour to this attendant, and indeed wished that she would not attempt to do these things; but, with all her kindliness, the manner of the sister-in-law was so very determined, that it allowed no refusal. Assuredly the Councillor was to be regarded as the most fortunate of married men, and with good reason: his home, children, and all his concerns were in the best possible order and under the most careful management. Still greater care and attention were given to his own personal requirements; never, not by the slightest token, did the wife make him feel her superiority, and so he remained in happy ignorance of the fact, and lived in the contented conviction that his wife day by day blessed her lot, and had abundant cause for doing so.

According to the laudable custom of Swabia, the gentlemen of Kügelfingen were in the habit of meeting together every evening at the hotel of the town. The Councillor was regularly there, certain, whether he returned home early or late, of a kindly reception and a nice hot supper. At these clubs, which consisted of both married men and bachelors, the subject *often turned on women, and on the married state in*

general; and it had hitherto been a fashion, whether good or bad, to make all sorts of satirical sallies, to utter complaints, half in jest, half in earnest; so that in this way the shady side of pretty nearly every household was revealed.

Herr Lindenmüller soon brought about a very salutary revolution on this matter. His subjects were so invariably the superiority and accomplishments of his wife, that the other married men, not wishing to be quite in the background, began to recollect the virtues of their wives; so that now all sorts of good qualities, peculiar to the ladies of Kügelfingen, but hitherto concealed, were brought into daylight. Anyone who had accidentally listened to one of these conversations would have thought that the golden age of old had come back, or at least that these were the days of chivalry, when each man outvied the other in the praise of his own lady.

"This I must say," began the first, "my wife does know how to cook. I never relish my dinner unless she has cooked it."

"Mine, too, can cook well enough," said a second; "but what I most admire is her skill in needlework; no one would believe it, but she makes all her dresses herself."

"My wife puts all her dresses out to make," said Herr Fund, a tradesman in the town, somewhat shyly; "but she does almost everything in the shop, and very seldom hires a sempstress."

"Mine is such a good manager with the children,"

boasted Herr Fink ; “ my two boys have learned to read entirely at home.”

“ My wife superintends all that goes on in the kitchen ; makes all the clothes worn by herself and the children, besides my night-shirts ; and when she undertakes to look after the garden, I know very well she needs no help of mine,” said the Councillor, in conclusion, with a smile of the utmost superiority.

When in their own homes, indeed, these husbands were sure to talk to their wives, not of their own accomplishments, but of the great excellences of Frau Lindenmüller ; which, to be sure, was not exactly the way of making one woman in love with another. If Frau Matilda was not really loved, yet she was, however, necessarily respected and admired ; for while conscientious and circumspect in her own house, she was on the other hand courteous and attentive to others ; and without mixing herself up in their concerns, was ready to help them in all possible ways. Whether some nourishment was wanted for the sick, or some entertainment for the healthy ; some help in any new kind of work, or in the difficult cut of a dress ; when a new head ornament had to be supplied on the eve of a party, —in all these things her hand was the cleverest, her eye the quickest, and her taste the most to be relied on. She was willing to give counsel and assistance to everyone ; but she herself needed neither : she seemed through all things sure of her way. In like manner she sought no intercourse,

and seldom made visits, though all who came to her were received with invariable kindness.

Indecision is so common a weakness in this world, that any trustworthy and decided person soon becomes a centre of attraction to others. Thus the house of the Councillor's wife was sought by young and old, and was seldom free from visitors. But courteous as she was, ready to receive every communication, and to respond to every confidence, Frau Lindenmüller had, on her part, none to make to others. No one could boast of the slightest acquaintance with even a glance into her past history; much less did they know aught of her own inner life. None, indeed, would have ventured to ask her any question of either. Not even a low sigh or a passing intimation conveyed an idea if ever these tell-tale eyes had seen a world of happiness and poesy, now foundered; or if she really felt happy in this more sober round of duty. And yet, in truth, no mystery hung about her early years. Her father, long since dead, had been Court Chaplain to the Prince of the small State in which she was born; and her husband related, with pride and pleasure, how she had been brought up there with the Princess. "Who would believe it?" said he, with extreme satisfaction, "when they see what a perfect housewife she is, and how thoroughly contented she feels now in our commoner circle. But I think she always inclined rather to practical activity, and after all, she is as well off with me as if she were a princess. We always keep an excel-

lent table, I am thankful to say, and she can live in as good style as she pleases. I never begrudge her any money, and it is only for her own pleasure that she does so much in the house ; she is welcome to as many servants as she chooses."

A stranger, however, Matilda was, and remained ; and such she was even to her husband's children, faithfully and conscientiously as she discharged every duty towards them. They were very good children, the little Rosa and Mina ; obedient to the mother, for whom they had the greatest respect, and from whom they never heard a harsh word ; who cared not only for their improvement, but also for their enjoyment ; yet they felt themselves strangers to her, unlike her in every feature, in every movement ; and comfortably as their home-life was arranged for them, yet they liked far better the society of companions of their own age, in some of the less refined burghers' houses. Even though great girls, they would eat large pieces of bread in the streets ; would rather wear grey than white stockings, and sought with the greatest delight the companionship of the maids in the dairy or spinning-room.

It seemed to the ladies of Kügelfingen a most incomprehensible thing that so refined and highly educated a dame never entered into so-called polite conversation. If ever for the express purpose of *pleasing* her, they commenced any remarks on *literature* or art, she would either sit quite silent or give with her accustomed courtesy such replies



only as were absolutely necessary. She gratefully declined the loan of books which were offered for her perusal, on the ground that she had no leisure for reading. She never attended concerts, and never herself touched a note of music, though her husband declared that she once played splendidly, and sang like a nightingale. She said that singing pained her chest. She carried on no correspondence; her parents had long been dead, and she had no brothers nor sisters. All her time and strength, all her thought and care, were given to household matters, to the welfare of the children, and the comfort of her husband. At home everything went on with an order and punctuality, with a sagacity in great things and a carefulness in small, such as can belong only to a thorough self-sacrifice.

Nothing but some wish of her husband could interrupt the restless activity of Frau Lindenmüller. From the moment of his entrance into the room, she was for him only, and ready to devote herself wholly to him. Domestic business never was so important but that it could be put aside in a minute if he wished her to accompany him in a walk or to do him any service, great or small. He was not one of those unfortunate men who are always coming with their wants and commissions at the most inconvenient time. It was not his lot to be told, at the very moment when he wanted to send out a servant, that it was an utter impossibility *she could be spared*. No; he was, in truth, *lord and master of the house*, kept in check solely

by his involuntary respect for his wife; and the thought never once occurred to him that he was in this case only the receiver, never the giver.

Although Frau Matilda had that quiet order and ease in housekeeping which is the secret of the best housewifery, yet there was amidst all this something feverish in her restless, unceasing activity. Except the few hours which by her husband's wish she devoted to recreation in his society, all her time was given to work. Of all those sweet musings which one indulges in the dreamy twilight hour she seemed to know nothing. One could almost fancy that she worked so hard in order to go to bed thoroughly tired, that in sleep she might find leisure for all those dreams which, when awake, she kept down with strong hand; that in order that the brilliant pictures of a fairy girlhood, passed in glittering saloons and fragrant gardens, amongst masterpieces of art and amid sweet sounds, might not arise in her soul by day, to unfit her for the fulfilment of her daily duties.

Such activity must wear out body and spirit, and the vital powers of the wife were gradually becoming exhausted, while those around, as they never heard her complain, never had any suspicion of illness. Still her busy industry and unwearied carefulness went on, while all her energy was required to support her weary footsteps; and throughout many a long night the Councillor snored away perfectly happy, without having a suspicion that his wife had passed the night on a sofa in the drawing-room, in order

that she might not disturb his sleep by her cough. The family doctor at length became aware of the prostration which she herself could no longer deny, and all at once the outward energy of the strong-hearted woman gave way. Her husband was very much shocked and distressed. She had never spoken of illness, and he had never thought of such a thing. With a similar quick perception of duty to that with which she had entered into the business of domestic life, Frau Matilda now gave herself up with entire submission to the rules laid down by her doctor. She, the indefatigable worker, lay still and weary on the sofa, or sat languidly in the easy-chair, and gave over all the housekeeping into the hands of the daughters, who undertook it with right good will, and never felt any care or embarrassment about the matter, save such as arose from concern for the mamma. Her demands on others were indeed few ; and while reclining in her chair, she was influencing all around with her accustomed discretion, nor could even the utmost weakness deter her from performing various little offices for her husband which he had been accustomed to receive from her own hand. He remained blind to the evident danger of her condition ; it would have been so sadly inconvenient to him to have thought about it. He always found her cheerful and ready to enter with interest into his slightest concerns, and he felt highly gratified with the thought that she was well off in being able to sit all day in her easy-chair, with nothing to do, and

only to ask for whatever she wanted. "She could not be better off if she had still remained with the princess," he said, contentedly, rubbing his hands; "on the contrary, people of that rank are apt to think little about those who are ill." Others saw plainly enough that the pale lily was gently but surely fading away into the grave; and they observed in her a touch of softness and tenderness which had formerly seemed wanting, even in her kindest smile; and although her heart and life were even yet, as ever, like an enclosed garden, yet she now won the love of many who hitherto had felt for her nothing but esteem and an unsympathizing admiration.

As on all the inner feelings of the heart, so on the subject of her faith, the invalid had preserved an utter silence. She complied with all the customs of the Church, but none could tell whether hers was really a life of faith. The clergyman of the parish visited her during her sickness, as a friend of the family. He saw clearly how fully she was aware of her situation, and of the nearness of her end; and it seemed to him almost as if she had a feeling of joy at the prospect of her dismissal to which she did not venture to give utterance. Even now, the most solemn and important crisis in her life remained a secret between herself and her God. Only by a few words casually dropped, and by the entirely peaceful expression of her countenance, could anyone infer the state of her spirit. It was as if a weight had been taken

off her heart when a release came from the restless activity that she had imposed on herself as a duty ; as if now, in the silence of her own thoughts, she had nothing to fear from the peculiar feelings and memories which she had so forcibly thrust away—as if the Martha, once so full of cares and anxieties, now lay down, like Mary, free from care, at the feet of the Lord.

The stranger has long since gone home, and her little hillock stands almost forgotten. As the green turf grew over it, so gradually the gap closed which her death had left, and which had seemed irreparable. There is no being on earth who is wholly necessary, none who cannot be in some measure replaced. The husband was sorely tried by her death, the nearness of which he had never been willing to believe ; his only comfort was that her life with him had been so happy, and that she had wanted for nothing. As it would have been a pity that such happiness should lie waste, he had again consoled himself by the society of a lady in the prime of life. The housekeeping was just as well managed, though with much more bustle than heretofore ; the daughters were portioned off, and the Councillor in his latter days rejoiced in the birth of a son. Now they all rest in peace, and the memory of the childless spouse of the grandfather lives only as a marvellous tradition among the succeeding generation.

And marvellous was the past of the stranger, compared with the work-a-day course of her later ..

life. She had carried the mystery of this past with her to the tomb. Did the little birds sing of it over her grave? or have the flowers related it one to another? Enough for us it is, that I have become acquainted with the story of her brightly-tinted life. She had known life and love—life's perfect whole. The cup of the slender lily, which budded in the golden glory of youth, had opened itself to the beam of a wondrously fair and pure youthful attachment. The Prince's young son, the brother of her friend, had, even during the plays of childhood, by his simple love and warm admiration, become very near and dear to her, and the early love and friendship grew stronger still among the later associations of life when, amid its noblest and simplest enjoyments, all the deep poetry of Matilda's heart found its complete realization. It was but a short dream; while children they had been left to do as they pleased, and no judicious tutor restrained the early development of the character of the youthful Prince. Time came for life in earnest, and according to the custom of people in his rank of life, a bride was about to be selected for the young man. With an impetuosity that would not be controlled, he demanded the beloved one of his early days. The idea seemed so absurd that none were willing even to discuss the question with him. Matilda was sent away; but the impassioned youth knew how, spite of all their efforts, to find means *of getting* access to her, and declared that he would *hear of no other engagement*. At length Matilda's

sense of honour and affection were appealed to; his friends left in her hand the future welfare of her native land, and they had not miscalculated when they trusted to her nobleness of character. There was one sacrifice in her power, one by which only she could wholly and finally separate herself from the Prince, and on this she resolved. With what feelings was known to herself and God alone. Only in one way she determined to show her faithfulness to the memory of the beloved one from whom she was to separate for ever in this world—she resolved that her choice should be such as that he must feel certain she had never been led to make it by even a shadow of love. She had, since leaving the court, resided with a distant relative in a remote town. From motives of respect to the bride of the Prince, all this story of “child’s play” had been kept most carefully concealed, and the astonishment of the public was undisguised when the delicate and beautiful young lady accepted the prosaic widower whose wooing they would have deemed altogether presumptuous if he had not happened to be so wealthy.

Matilda went forward even to the altar supported by the feeling of her great self-sacrifice. Then first the fearful significance of this step became clear to her—the entire sacred meaning of wedlock—and she became aware of the burden she was laying on her soul in a choice in which she could not hope, or even wish, to know what love was. *It was too late then to draw back; but she*

confessed to herself the double-meaning of her heart, which had hoped while the wife of the one to hold fast the memory of the other, and she resolved to strive to rescue her soul from the precipice on which she stood by breaking once for all with the past, and to silence the voice of her conscience by an unremitting discharge of all duty. And that purpose which she had resolved on, that she had carried on with the whole energy of her spirit. Not a sound, not a scent from the magic beautiful of the past had ever been permitted to enter her heart or to disturb the strict routine of her daily duties. She had devoted her life to the fulfilment of her resolve.

And was it the right way which Matilda chose? I think not. She herself could in the last days of her life perceive clearly that had she cast herself, like a child, in all her weakness, humbly and trustfully on the heart of her Father, she would have reached her aim more surely, more simply, than when she walked on her way like a servant, bearing faithfully and uncomplainingly even to death, the self-imposed yoke of a hard service. And who shall say how hard indeed is such service?—a service which demanded of her that she should fulfil, without the aid of love, a work which can be rightly performed only by the richest and deepest affection.

And yet, I believe, that even though in error, *she afterwards did what she could: that a brave heart fought a good fight, and that she is now numbered with those who have found perfect peace.*

VII.

In Front of the Last House.

"The scent of violets hidden in the green
 Brought back into my empty soul and frame
 The time when I remember to have been
 Joyous and free from blame."

THERE lies a certain air of romance about the last of everything in this world, from the last knight to the last fiddler. Thus, the last house in a place may be said to have a poetry of its own, from the sort of twofold life that it leads. On one side it belongs to the row of other houses, the busy prose of everyday life; the other side looks dreamily out into the wide world of nature, into the beguiling distance, and seems to hold mysterious intercourse with moon and starlight.

On a pleasant day in autumn two young students might be seen standing just in front of the last house of a little town. They were gay young fellows, who were passing through Swabia for the first time. Their college-life must have been as yet in its fairest freshness. This was apparent from the somewhat exaggerated student costume, the gaily-embroidered smoking-cap, the long pipe

—the stem of which was taller than themselves—and by the many-coloured tobacco-pouch, which dangled down in front from the button-hole of the “shamefully short coat,” as an old university licence called it.

The two young travellers roamed about at random, in confident expectation of meeting at every step an ingenuous Annamreile, a dull Dolpatsch, or some other Swabian original. Indeed, they had been getting quite astonished at finding that people here behaved themselves pretty much as in other places; and they went on quietly amusing themselves with the Swabian dialect without ever once perceiving that they, by the singularity of their dress, their North German dialect and swaggering manners, were contributing on their side to the amusement of the country folk. At one moment they were supposed to be Russians, at another they were said to be Frenchmen; by the generality, however, they were finally declared to be a sort of rope-dancers or acrobats, and a number of young lads of the town followed them with the pressing inquiry, “Hark ye, when do you strike up?” They fully remarked these goings-on, regarding them all the time as a sort of Swabian country fashion, and they jogged on in excellent spirits, congratulating themselves on having already met with an incident so peculiarly Swabian.

It was not long before they had come to the front of the last house in the village, and were looking with admiration at the cleanliness and the

appearance of elegance which distinguished it from most of the other houses. It was newly built, and had a pretty porch which had just been white-washed. On a flower-stand placed before the windows of the ground-floor, carnations and wall-flowers were blooming in freshness and luxuriance, while a canary-bird, in a green cage above, hopped to and fro with joyous twitter. Through the open window might be seen a guitar hanging on the wall by a blue riband, and several other musical instruments were in other parts of the room. In the little garden bower close to the house the young men could discern, amid the rich red leaves of the Virginian creeper which was hanging down in graceful festoons, a couple of fair, girlish figures. "Enchanting!" whispered Paul Birken to his friend Helmstatt. "Now, could anyone have expected all this poetry after the dirty streets through which we have wandered? Do you think that the people who live in this charming house can also be Swabians?"

"It is a strange house," said Helmstatt, who had examined it more closely. "Do you see the low, narrow, grated windows of the second story, seeming to correspond so little with the pleasant rooms on the ground-floor?"

"Really, that is strange," rejoined Paul. Just then a face peeped out from between the iron bars above—a face which seemed an abstract of *vulgarity and villainy*, forming, indeed, a singular contrast to flowers, birds, and guitars.

"My good man," said Helmstatt to a passer-by, "what sort of a building is that?"

The person thus addressed was a travelling artisan, who had enough knowledge and experience of the world at once to recognise the strangers as students. He replied, in his very best German, "That is, an please you, the new-built county prison."

"A prison!" exclaimed Paul.

"Yes, indeed," continued the townsman, with genuine burgher pride; "isn't it a handsome public building? If it was only a little larger it would be as good as the finest house of correction at the capital. To be sure there are a good many different opinions about it; and there are even some people who say, 'What do rogues want with such a grand house?' but I admire it, not out of love to the rogues, oh dear no, only for the honour of our town."

"And the flowers and the birds, and the little garden, who do they belong to?" said Paul, interrupting this rambling discussion of the subject.

"The sergeant of the county prison lives down below, an please you," answered the burgher. "He has been all sorts of things in the course of his life—joiner, soldier, and to speak respectfully, even a stage-player. Now he has got this little resting-place; he isn't badly off here. The *plant and flowers* all belong to his girls. It does seem rather inconsistent with a prison-house to have *music* going on so frequently downstairs; but the

old man doesn't often do much now, and his wife looks after the prisoners; she understands it."

It was really a relief to the students when the communicative man was called away, for he had nothing about him that seemed sufficiently original or peculiar to Swabia to make further intercourse with him interesting. "What do you think now?" said Paul to his friend. "There is an inn just across the way; shall we take up our quarters there and study the mysteries of this last house? A gaol above, and flowers and sounds of music below; really that seems enough attraction."

"You egregiously deceive yourself in getting up any interest in this matter," said Helmstatt, in whom, at times, the sober element predominated; "and I have no desire to turn indoors again already. The morning is fine, the road onward lies all through vineyards; let us stroll on a bit at a venture, and see what the country is like. I should say we might come back here in the evening, and stay for the night at the inn, and then you can just give a serenade under the prison windows, and listen to find out whether the gaoler's little daughter answers you with her guitar."

"So be it," said Paul, with a side glance at the bower, through the broad leafage of which, however, nothing could be seen of the faces of the fair young maidens who were sitting there slicing some beans.

The merry young travellers strolled forth out into the blue distance on a gladsome journey of

discovery ; and with some laughing and whispering the young girls looked stealthily after them. Night came on, and Frau Hiller, the circumspect wife of the prison sergeant, had told the girls to bring in their flowers and close the shutters. She had taken supper to the only prisoner who at that time was an occupant of the room above, and she was looking round the house to see that all was in order before the last meal of the day was arranged on the family table. The master of the house, who had long been used to see both the household and official management in the hands of his vigorous consort, contented himself by marching about with military step to all the places where she had already been, tapping at all the locks which she had long since fastened, and with a very decided air, saying continually to himself, "Yes, yes, I must have everything right and in good order ; I must see to everything myself," which remarks his wife suffered to pass in silence, though she smiled contemptuously.

At length the busy wife had indeed "seen to everything," and the father, with a side glance at her, took the violin down from the wall, when Clara, the elder of the girls, immediately fetched the guitar, and Pauline, the younger, drank a glass of water in order to clear her sweet voice. Frau Hiller, considering herself one of a very respectable family, had bethought herself of giving pretty names as well as a certain amount of education to her daughters. The practising, however, was

at best only tolerated by her, for her practical nature was not friendly to the fine arts, which, as she often said, "brought no grist to the mill."

"What! another family cossort, neighbour Hiller?" (meaning concert), said the talkative tinman whom we met in the morning, and who had just looked in for a little neighbourly chat.

"Yes; but it does not pay much to be always at music in these hard times," said the wife; "everything is so dear, and the earnings so little. Then, for the whole week past we have had only one thief up there, at fourpence a day; we get just nothing at all out of that."

"Well, never mind, neighbour," said the tinman, consolingly; "the harvest is now just coming on, and the wine is good, and there will be plenty of fighting and getting into prison after that."

"I am thankful to hear it!" said Frau Hiller, ironically, while the daughter began to sing,

"Lonesome, lonesome—no, that am I never."

"I don't like riots," she continued, "when one gets all the cells full of fellows whom nobody can manage, and who nearly tear down the walls. Rioters and murderers are not to my taste, though that last was a steady man enough, and I am glad he has not been beheaded. No, a few quiet, orderly people, perhaps for defamation of a magistrate, or some other thing of the sort, who know how to behave properly, and show themselves grateful for regular attendance——"

Just at this moment, the loud and clear little bell which led from the court-house to the sergeant's quarters was rung sharply, and "Ho ! sergeant !" cried a number of voices from the street in wild confusion.

The sergeant hastily laid down the violin and hurried to his post.

At the entrance to the court there stood a rough-looking throng, a multitude of peasants, and in the midst of them were the two students who had in the morning walked off so merrily and jovially. There stood Paul, without his cap, his hair in a tangled mass, his face glowing with crimson, and his person bespattered with blood, striking wildly at all about him, and only held in with great difficulty. Helmstatt, looking pale and distressed, was speaking to his friend and striving to pacify him. Then came the wild shouting of the peasants, "He has stabbed him, he is dead as a mouse, and that man there ought to be served the same." In the midst of all this Birken was calling out loudly, "Let me go, you dogs, you mean, inhospitable mob." And every now and then the soothing voice of Helmstatt could be heard saying, "Pray be quiet ; do keep still, I entreat you."

The chief officer of the court was yet standing on the stairs in his shirt and trowsers, and behind him stood the maid, who, at the bidding of his wife, was holding, with outstretched arms, his cloth coat, ready for him to put on. Frau Hiller, with her usual presence of mind, had hastened to the

spot, and now stood with a lighted lanthorn surveying the group.

At length the chief officer of the court, who soon recovered his wits, succeeded by his lion-like voice in obtaining silence; and having assembled the policemen belonging to the court, he commenced an examination of the details of this affray. He could get nothing from Paul but wild, passionate exclamations against that inhospitable mob. The peasants began telling the last part of the story first, and Helstatt was the only one who could give a calm account of this tragical proceeding. The two friends had, it seems, wandered carelessly on in the morning into the open country. First of all they had gone into the green vineyards, rich with their ripening grapes, and had delighted themselves by gathering freely the sweet gifts of autumn. They were thus employed, when they were interrupted by the rough voice of the vineyard-keeper from the neighbouring village to which the vineyards belonged, who called them rudely to account, and ordered them to follow him immediately into the presence of a magistrate. Now, this they were by no means disposed to do, and while Helstatt was contending with the keeper, and endeavouring to prove to him that in their own State their conduct would not have been an infringement of any law, and was arguing that a law which they had not known could not be binding upon them, the keeper replied with the most unperturbable coolness, "Well, it's all one to me,

the justice shall decide it." Paul, who was known among his comrades as the most skilful of wrestlers, came up from behind, and laying his hands suddenly on the shoulders of the rude keeper, turned him round, and cut the finest somersault right over his head. While the man looked about him in the first confusion caused by this trick, the two students, full of boyish fun, scurried to and fro down the mountain side, hallooing loudly, till they quite vanished from the sight of the unwieldy servant of justice. After a long and fatiguing race, they reached at length a distant village, where, in proportion to their late laborious efforts, or rather in some measure beyond proportion, they refreshed themselves with food and with the tart Swabian wine, and had, moreover, from the effects of the latter, become wildly excited.

Making merry with their late little adventure and its comical conclusion, in their hasty retreat they had rushed towards a small, secluded, out-of-the-world place, where they gave way, in a foolish sense of their wild liberty, to all sorts of mad frolic. As evening was coming on, Paul had persisted, spite of Helmstatt's opposition, on going back to the little town which they had quitted in the morning, for he said he did not intend to take another road from a cowardly fear of that bailiff.

The keeper, meanwhile, who had regarded Paul's daring somersault as a peculiarly insulting piece of derision, had been searching in vain for *any trace* of the fugitives. Hoping that they might

return to Gugelfingen in the evening, and again pass near the vineyards, he called the neighbouring peasants to his assistance, and set forth on his way towards the town. The students, after having wandered several times from the right road, had actually got as far as Gugelfingen, and were singing a duet as they walked along. Paul had not yet wholly recovered from the excitement caused by the Swabian wine which he had in his fatigue so greatly relished, but Helmstatt had much more cooled down.

The two young men were suddenly startled by a loud shout and cry of "Halt !" and soon found themselves seized by sturdy fists.

"Ah ! you college chaps," said one of the peasants, "come along off to the magistrate ; he'll teach you how to ride over vineyard-keepers in this way."

In vain the students tried to release themselves from the grasp of the men, who had just before heard from the vineyard-keeper a description of them which made them regard the youths as very monsters ; and they held them only the more firmly, the more they saw their efforts to escape. Paul was little desirous of a close encounter with these Swabian fists, and he struck about angrily in all directions to ward them off ; while Helmstatt was using every endeavour to quiet both him and the peasants. At length, unhappily, Paul caught at a dagger which he had bought on his journey, not because he had had any idea of using it in

self-defence, but from a mere childish pleasure in possessing so romantic a weapon. This dagger he now thrust out in blind passion, when suddenly the vineyard-keeper, struck by the instrument, fell with a loud cry to the ground.

The general sense of horror at this deed of blood brought the peasants to one decision, though it soon appeared that their desire to avenge the prostrate man was far more vehement than their impulse to succour him. While some of the party hastened on to the little town to fetch the magistrate thither, the others bore off the two prisoners to the town court, treating them by the way with every kind of reproach and abuse. Helmstatt was like one thunderstruck as he saw the tragical turn of this piece of youthful folly. In vain he pleaded that he might be allowed to go back at once to the help of the wounded man. He was obliged, against his will, to follow the peasants; while Paul, after his first amazement at the deed he had done, worked himself up anew into a state of frenzy which made his friend fear for his senses.

When Helmstatt had given the officer an intelligible account of this wild scene, the latter said to the peasants—

“And where have you left the wounded man?”

“Allow me to say, sir,” said a man who was just entering to the chief officer, “that the justice has ordered a guard to keep watch over him there, on the field where he fell, and where he is still *lying*.”

"Is he dead, then?" inquired the officer.

"No; but the justice said he must remain lying on the very spot on which he was wounded, for he says that is the way to have 'popular monstration' (meaning ocular demonstration), and the justice is a very learned man."

"Oh, the wisdom of clerks!" sighed the officer, as he sent off immediately for both physician and surgeon, with orders that the wounded man should clearly state the circumstances either in his own home or in the town, if he had been brought hither.

Our two students were disposed of for the night in two separate quarters of the prison. Though women were not allowed to enter the court where the examination of the students had been held, yet Frau Hiller naturally enough found little difficulty in getting a pretty correct account of all that had happened.

"Quick, Clara and Pauline!" she called out; "put beds upon the boards upstairs in numbers 4 and 6. Stay, Pauline!" she added, "your little table had better be taken up, and also a couple of straw-chairs, and china washing-things, with a glass bottle for water."

"But, mother," Clara suggested, "these people are surely murderers—they have stabbed the keeper!"

"Oh, there has often been a cry of murder here and murder there," said the mother, impetuously. "These are respectable young men, and that keeper is a brute of a fellow. And then, as to his being

killed, I daresay it will not turn out so bad as that. Who knows but the gentlemen may be set at liberty to-morrow, and then you will not regret having done this."

"You will not get much out of them, however, neighbour," said the wise tinman. "They are students with light purses, if they have any purses at all, depend upon it."

"And what of that?" answered the servant of justice, in a compassionate tone. "Do you think I act only from self-interest? It is not for that alone, but for the honour of my house that I choose them to be well attended to. Up to the present time everyone here has been well treated—of course, you know, with a proper difference; and I should like the gentlemen to see that they have at last come to respectable people, if they have not done so before."

The two prisoners were escorted in by the sergeant. Helmstatt walked onward, his head bowed down, and overcome by a deep sense of his painful situation; and Paul, whose passion was now beginning to abate, looked about him with confused glances, and seemed as if even now he could not comprehend it.

Frau Hiller by a few sharp words dispersed the crowd of people, banged her house-doors to, and gave various instructions to her husband as she delivered up to him the house-keys.

"You gentlemen will be served to your satisfaction," she said soothingly to Helmstatt.

She knew her place too well to say much at present, while as yet no one could tell how the matter would end. Then the prison-doors were closed, and the street was all quiet.

The Hiller family were for some hours after kept in a little agitation about these two young men, so unlike their ordinary prisoners; and they could also hear their restless pacing up and down far on into the night, while the thief in the other room slept as if his was the sleep of one who bore a good conscience. Clara had already read many romances, and now all sorts of visions of beautiful stories came into her mind which told of things which had befallen gaolers' daughters, and which she thought it quite possible might repeat themselves in her own history, and she cast another glance at the mirror before putting out the light. The young Pauline, however, who had only just now discovered that these young men were the very same merry students who that morning passed their arbour in such joyous mood, wept long and bitterly on her pillow, and never sank into sleep till the steps overhead were still.

The autumn sun had at length worked its way through its veil of mist, and shone out clearly as it had done on the previous morning on the window decked with its flowers, and ornamented by the golden canary-bird and the deep crimson of the Virginian creeper. But at the barred window above a young man was now leaning with a face deadly pale, looking over the landscape with dim



and weary eyes, and striking his forehead as if to discover whether it was not all a wild, disordered dream, from which it was time to awake. It was no dream; and notwithstanding the stupefying headache which yet remained from the twofold intoxication of yesterday, every one of its occurrences rose up before Paul's memory as a painful reality. He was a prisoner! And who can ever understand all that that word includes unless he has himself experienced captivity? He was now cut off from the whole range of free, fresh, joyous life. Like a lion in a cage, he strode restlessly up and down again and again in the narrow space, and turned about in powerless agony when he struck against the closely-bounded limits. And he was, perhaps, a murderer! Here was yet an added anguish, which lay like a mountain on his young heart, that until now, in the thoughtless exuberance of youthful spirits, had never before felt a consciousness of guilt. If he could only cast from him that terrible thought—but no! it would not do. Often indeed he repeated to himself that the keeper, with his coarse, brutal way of proceeding, had been more to blame than he had; but again and again he seemed to hear the terrible cry of agony with which the man had sunk to the ground, and he felt as if all life and effort were utterly crushed out for ever from his soul by this heavy load of guilt.

Paul had now indeed time to study fully the mysteries of the last house. A soft step rustled *below* amid the withered leaves with which the

garden was strewn. It was the footstep of a child, a little girl of fourteen or fifteen years old, perhaps. A slender, child-like figure, with her rich fair hair in long braids, now raised her little head timidly towards the window, and the young man felt as if he once more beheld a heaven of innocence—the innocence which he had lost for ever—in the unruffled features, in those blue eyes of childhood. He threw himself on the bed and wept. The bolts and locks were shortly afterwards opened. Frau Hiller appeared with his breakfast—no prison-fare, but coffee quite respectably and nicely arranged. He could not look at her, and a feeling of the deepest humiliation stole upon him at the thought that, prisoner as he was, under so heavy an accusation, he could not now look anyone in the face.

The good woman saw in a minute that the consolatory speeches which she had prepared would be out of place here, and she satisfied herself with inquiring as to his wishes—indemnifying herself for his silence, however, with Helmstatt, whom she found much more accessible, and who was only too glad to learn from the talkative dame (diplomatic as she thought herself) something of what might be going on.

It was a real relief, a lightening of the heart's load to Birken, to be called up for his examination, and thus to get rid of his own tormenting thoughts; though it was again a fresh torment to walk through the short passage from the prison to the court of justice amid a *gazing* crowd of people. The black-

eyed Clara stood as if by accident in the way as he was led through, but little Pauline sat in the arbour weeping bitterly.

The two friends did not look straight at each other's faces when they met in the court. Ah, how had all mirth disappeared ! what bitter dregs remained from yesterday's pleasure, which moreover had been a wrong and excited one ! With what deep humiliation did Paul plead his intoxication as the only excuse for yesterday's outrage ! The officer, a judicious and humane man, soon ascertained that Helmstatt was innocent, and perceived also the various mitigations of Paul's mad violence ; but the vineyard-keeper still lay in great danger, and till his evidence could be heard in court, or till his accusations were silenced by death, the inquiry could not proceed, the strict custody of Paul could be no way relaxed, and the friends could not be allowed to speak to each other except in the presence of witnesses.

Slowly and wearily did week after week drag on with Paul, and the occasional conversations with his friend before others seemed rather a pain than a refreshment to his spirits. The only interruption to his prison life were the examinations through which he had to pass ; and at these times he was compelled to stand opposite to the wailing wife and crying children of the injured man, and to listen to descriptions of his own wrong and their misery. Nor could he afterwards, in the lonely *silence* of his prison, shake off the agonizing im-



pression of this scene. He did not exactly wish to forget the wrong-doing of the past, but even in this bitter school he had not as yet rightly learned the lesson taught by this stern experience of real life. He had not yet learned to take on himself like a man his deed and all its painful results. He did not enter into a solemn self-judgment, nor was he filled with that deep sense of guilt, or that penitence of heart, which might have led him to feel deeply humbled, and enabled him to bear quietly and rightly the outward consequences of his misconduct. He, in his impotent rage, suffered all these lessons of experience to pass by him, and behaved like a wilful boy.

There was but one ray of light which dawned on the gloomy prison life of Paul. It was the sight of the slender, fawn-like figure of the fair child as she glided occasionally through the garden, fleet and bright as a sunbeam, and so often raised her innocent face, full of sympathy, to look up at his window. Pauline was one of those rare poetical beings who now and then may be discovered in the midst of the most dissimilar surroundings, and seem to our minds a lovely wonder and a memento of nature in her original beauty and simplicity. All the movements of the young girl were marked by an unconscious grace that bore no trace of the shy, unbecoming, and awkward carriage which often marks the transition age between girlhood and early womanhood; but like the rose, she was lovely at every stage of her unfolding. Paul had

never once spoken to her. His friend, who was still detained till the conclusion of the inquiry, was, however, in less strict custody, on parole; and he often joined in the evening music of the family, to the great satisfaction of Frau Hiller. She would willingly have granted the same pleasure to Paul also, although she had far too good an idea of propriety to allow either of her daughters to set foot in the prison, notwithstanding that Clara had manifested a great desire to do so.

It was but on one or two occasions that Pauline had been permitted to accompany her mother when she entered into the prison with food for the young man. A world of kindness and innocence seemed to lie in the blue eyes which the little girl fixed so compassionately and sorrowfully on him, but he never ventured to address a single word to her. He only listened earnestly whenever he heard her voice, or her silvery laugh in the garden below, or when he could detect the tones of her singing amid Clara's bolder notes in-doors. Frau Hiller had quite forgiven his early indifference to her conversation, now that he talked more freely with her; and this he often did, in his anxiety to gain any tidings of the progress of the wounded man. Helmstatt, however, always had the preference in her regard.

It had now become late in autumn. Even the last red leaves had fallen from the flexible boughs which wound over the arbour; the garden had become quite desolate, and Paul very seldom saw

his little rose-bud. The knowledge of his unhappy conduct and circumstances had also been communicated to the family of his uncle, who stood in the place of a father to him. The admonitory letters of the uncle did not particularly contribute to Paul's cheerfulness, and he looked forward with dread rather than with joy to a visit which his relative promised.

The nights became longer and more leaden than ever, and the time weighed more and more heavily upon him. Helmstatt had been discharged on bail, under promise of presenting himself at the conclusion of the inquiry ; and thus he was quite alone.

One evening the Hiller family were absent at a christening feast, and the stillness of death lay on the prison. Paul sat there brooding gloomily over the past. It seemed to him as if his youth lay at an immeasurable distance behind him ; as if the whole purpose of his life was marred. Just then he heard light footsteps on the staircase in the passage, and a timid voice asked through the key-hole—"Are you awake, Herr Birken?"

"To be sure I am ; who is it ?" he asked, in some alarm.

"It is I, Pauline," she said from without, and quite out of breath. "I have run up very quickly, for I have just spoken to the tinman, who has been to see the vineyard-keeper at Leiningen to-day for the first time ; and the doctor has said for certain that he will recover, and be none the worse

for the wound. And the keeper himself has told the tinman that he bears you no grudge, and does not wish to bring you into trouble, for that people when they come to lie on a sick-bed learn to think, and he says that he knows that he rushed too passionately into the quarrel."

Almost breathless with having run and talked so fast, the young girl ceased speaking.

"Pauline," cried Paul from within, in an agitated voice, "you have come to me like an angel of comfort. Child, dear child, can you not bring me a light?"

Paul felt as if he could no longer repress his desire to see the young girl. She had taken a heavy weight off his heart, and was he not to be allowed to thank the dear little messenger of peace? Pauline had fetched a light from below, and had found the keys. After many attempts her unsteady hand succeeded at length in opening the lock, and she now stood blushing and looking frightened, while her blue eyes were cast down in shyness before the young man in whom the long-subdued fire of youth now readily gleamed out.

"And you came alone and of your own accord, dear child, to bring me this good news?" he said.

"Oh yes," she replied, timidly; "I have pitied you so much; it must be so dreadful to have anything so heavy on the conscience, and to know that one has made any human being unhappy."

"And should not you like to make some one person happy?" said Paul, warmly.

"Pauline, Pauline," called out her mother from below, in an angry voice; for she had just discovered the absence of the young girl, and soon perceived too with amazement, that the keys of the prison were missing.

Pauline quickly and resolutely sprang out of the room, leaving the prison doors wide open. Paul never once thought of making an escape, he only listened with some anxiety to the sharp words and the timid replies which he heard going on downstairs.

Frau Hiller came forthwith, with a deeply resentful countenance and a threatening step, up the stairs, banged to the door, bolted it, and locked it three times over, and observed thenceforward for many another long day a most reproachful silence. Paul did not trouble himself much on this account; the heaviest burden had been taken off his spirit, and he dreamed both by day and night of the dear little dove who had brought him the olive-branch of peace.

The wounded man was at length so far restored that he could appear before the court. It was with peculiar feelings that he and Paul stood face to face; the rough man, once so full of strength, now languid and pale from long sickness, and the once high-spirited youth now wan and broken down by long imprisonment. The anger which the former had cherished as an outraged servant of the public, and the fierce craving for vengeance which had lurked in his heart on account of his wound,

had grown milder under the feeble yet comforting sense of gradually returning health. Paul's aunt too, who resided in Prussia, had, though at a distance, ministered abundantly to the needs and comforts of the sick man and his family. This kindlier disposition evinced itself very much in his evidence, in which he admitted his own rough and rude behaviour. The inquiry was closed, and the sentence which the magistrate assigned as probable was one which Paul felt to be but slight.

Once again the injurer and the injured met together in the hall outside the room in which the magistrate sat. Paul offered the keeper his hand, saying, "Will you forgive me?"

"I don't bear you any malice now," said the other goodnaturedly, and shaking it heartily. "I was fiery too. I ought to have made more allowance for the foolishness of young people."

Paul smiled and pocketed the compliment, and returned to his prison with a heart lightened beyond expression. The popular feeling also had, after this scene of reconciliation, turned in his favour, and it was rather with sympathizing than unfriendly sentiments that the crowd followed him on his brief passage thither.

Frau Hiller, who now again showed herself more graciously disposed, requested Paul to walk for a little while into her room, till his prison upstairs was thoroughly cleaned and put in order. She congratulated him on this favourable preliminary decision, and the gaol sergeant remarked very

sagely and knowingly, "Yes, yes ; I always said things would not be so bad." Clara appeared in her best trim and presented his coffee with an amiable smile. The little Pauline alone was missing ; she was busy in the prison upstairs, and in the course of some hours, which after all Paul had found intolerably long in the Hiller family circle, she appeared to say that all was now put in order.

Paul was very pleasantly surprised to find his prison room so comfortably and cheerfully arranged. It was not till after the first investigation had taken place, that the superintendents of the prison were permitted to beautify it with the gifts which his kind aunt had forwarded long ago. A brightly-coloured carpet covered the roughly-boarded floor ; the dark iron gratings were concealed behind some snow-white curtains, and on the little table by the window there stood a glass full of the earliest snow-drops, the gift of the white dove of peace, who, with a blush of shyness, vanished as he came into the room.

Paul was henceforth under far less strict custody. He was allowed to take walks in company with an attendant ; and on sunny spring days he had the range of the gaol-sergeant's little garden. Frau Hiller welcomed him also very freely to her family circle. This, indeed, was rendered endurable only by the sweet presence of Pauline, for neither the sage discourses of their friend the tinman, the fluent conversation of mamma, the knowing and

important observations of papa, nor even Clara's musical performances, would have long captivated him. The younger girl was indeed still but the timid fawn, the closely-folded flower bud, and he rarely succeeded in drawing forth a sentence from her; but how many charming enigmas these blue eyes, these sweet, childish lips seemed to hide! There were hours when he felt that he could bear long years of imprisonment, if only he might watch the gradual unfolding of that flower.

It was a great delight to Paul to think that he should be the first to reveal the magic garden of poetry to this young spirit. "Are you fond of reading, Pauline?" he asked one day.

"Oh yes, I am very fond of it; but unfortunately my mother is not."

"What books have you read, then?" he said.

"I have read 'The Miller's Three Daughters,' and 'Geneveva,' and 'Rose of Tannenberg,'" was her reply; "but I never can remember the names of any of the other books I have read."

"If you were only to hear a poem of Schiller's now, Pauline!" said Birken, on one occasion, and he read aloud forthwith the "Maid of Orleans," which he thought could not fail to touch a young and sensitive spirit. He read it with all the same enthusiasm which he had felt when first this glorious poetry had thrilled through his own heart, glancing every now and then to catch the expression of the sweet young face, which he could seldom get sight of, as it was half hidden behind mamma.



"Don't you think that very beautiful, now?" he asked, after a while.

Clara expressed her admiration in a multitude of words. Frau Hiller did not suppose that anyone could expect enthusiasm from her. Papa quietly went on cutting clothes-pegs, which, next to music, was his favourite recreation. Pauline was still silent.

"How do you like it, Pauline?" Birken inquired, after a long pause.

"Oh, it is very beautiful indeed," she said, colouring; "but then it is only a story."

Paul began explaining to her very zealously how much there was of real history in the story; and if he did not find her taste for poetry so much developed as he had expected, yet he was charmed with her innocent, astonished exclamations, and her extremely simple answers to his questions. "Would you have had courage to venture so much for your Fatherland?" he asked; and when Pauline answered, "Oh no, I should have been afraid," he thought it all very pretty and womanly.

At length the long winter came to an end, and Helmstatt arrived in order to pay a visit to his friend and beguile the weariness of the imprisonment. Paul's final sentence was now declared to him. It purported that he was to continue under custody for some months within the citadel, whither he would next day be removed. The only prospect which at present lay before him was but an exchange of prisons, and indeed it was a separation from his

little rose-bud ; but he could not help it ; he actually found himself rejoicing over it—it was a change, a journey, and his spirit was too youthful, too elastic, not to long for it.

It was a lovely April Sunday morning, one of those days of early spring which seem so full of promise that the young are apt to say to themselves, “Surely something wonderful and delightful must happen to-day.” The two friends leaned by the open window, looking into the little garden below. Just then Pauline came out of the house to gather herself a little nosegay to wear to church. An air of something peculiar seemed to encircle the child. The fair braids which usually hung down were to-day tastefully gathered up, and instead of the usual Sunday frock and mantle, she was enveloped in a long black dress. A holy, Sabbath-like repose lay on the childish features. It was Pauline’s confirmation-day.

“Well, that little maiden will some day be a beauty,” said Helmstatt, half-aloud.

“Hush ! she is a little angel,” whispered Paul, warmly pressing his friend’s hand ; “do not interrupt her sweet, pure peace of mind.”

“Well, it is a good thing,” said his friend, smiling, “that she is too young to fall in love, and that you are going away, otherwise there might be a piece of youthful folly here which your uncle would find it harder to forgive than the last. Meantime, adieu. I will take care to be ready for our journey to-morrow, as of course I shall go with

you. Frau Hiller tells me that you are to spend to-day with them ; but I thanked her for the invitation which she extended to me, and told her I had already ordered my dinner at the inn ; so good-bye till we meet again."

Immediately after Helmstatt's departure Frau Hiller appeared in her best attire, and wearing a most awe-imposing state-cap. "You will do us the honour of dining with us to-day," she said, with a certain cool, almost defiant manner, which, until the speech gradually unfolded itself, always caused a sort of uneasiness in the person whom she addressed. "It gives me great pleasure for you to do so, for but for this we never have the satisfaction of seeing you for any length of time." Paul did not very well know if he was expected to express any great regret on this account. "Now I have only one request to make," she continued, in the tone of a lecture rather than of an invitation, "and that is, that you will, to-day, discontinue all sorts of foolishness (you will excuse my calling it such), with my little Pauline. I am not so dull as I may seem to be, and I have observed your looks, and that they always follow her, child as she is." She cut short the reply which Paul was about to make, and continued : "You are going away now, and you will soon forget us, though we have passed such pleasant days together. But this is the child's confirmation-day, and you must respect her religious feelings. She, in her simplicity, thinks nothing at all about it."

"Do you imagine," said Paul, his heart swelling with emotion, "do you think that the innocence of your child, the gradual unfolding of this sweet flower, can be dearer to you than to me? No word, no breath of mine shall ever injure her sweet, maiden purity, for I wish to preserve it for myself." It was out! the secret thought of his heart had, without intention, without reflection, passed the boundary of his lips. Even Frau Hiller was wondrously, if not unpleasantly surprised by this sudden declaration.

"You are not in earnest?" she said, hesitatingly.

"You may think the wooing of a prisoner—a man under sentence of punishment—something strange," Paul proceeded to say, the strong and passionate words gradually overleaping any previously-resolved caution; "but I feel as if this child belonged to me, and that she is destined to bloom in the light of my affection. You know," he added, rather more calmly, "I shall soon now be at liberty to pursue my studies; in four, or at the most five years, I hope to be independent; then I shall come back and redeem my word."

Ardently as Frau Hiller had, in secret, desired that at some future time her little daughter might be provided for in a higher rank of life than her own, yet she was too prudent and practical a woman to decide at once on accepting an engagement so premature. "You are too good," she began, with some embarrassment; "I really do believe that my Pauline might be equal to any

position if she were trained for it; and it does seem, indeed, almost like a wonderful indication of Providence that you are named Paul and she Pauline. But consider, this child is scarcely fifteen years old; and besides, what would your own family say to this? And then, again, the girl might lose her young days in waiting till you made your way in the world, and might, after all, remain unmarried; and on the sacred day of her confirmation, too. No, it is not at all a thing that can be listened to."

Paul, still more warmly excited, drew a ring from his finger. "This," he said, "is the mourning ring which I wear for my mother, and you will readily believe that I would not misuse nor trifle with so sacred a memorial. I forbear to place it on Pauline's finger myself, as nothing ought to be done that might disturb the peace of her childhood. I leave it in your own hands; keep it as a pledge of my faithfulness till the right time comes."

"Mother, there's the bell," called out Pauline from below, and Frau Hiller hastened down, carefully depositing the ring in her pocket. Paul stepped out and saw the young girl standing on the stairs in all her youthful loveliness, every budding feeling of maiden vanity kept under by the serious importance of the religious act in which she was about to join. His heart was overflowing, but it trembled also with sacred reverence. "God bless thy path, my child," said he, deeply moved,

as he let her pass on her way without hindrance. And oh, as he looked after her, how did he wish that years had wings! how earnestly he longed for the day when he might lead her as a bride to the altar, so sweet, and pure, and good, and his, his only!

Paul had now taken up his new quarters at the citadel. It was a mild form of imprisonment. If indeed he missed the view of the little garden, and the sight of the rose-bud that had brightened his narrow prison in Gugelfingen, still he could look, instead, from the mountain height far away over the hills and down to the luxuriant country landscape; and the clipped wings of life's enjoyments and of youthful courage, grew again with fresh vigour. There, too, he met with good companionship—students, merry sons of the Muses, young literary men who were just at this time placed in confinement here for some political combination likely to prove dangerous to the State; and they all endeavoured to console themselves as well as they could for the loss of their golden freedom. It was a cheerful, intellectual, animated sort of life, and these dangerous subjects of the State kept in durance here had every reason to be satisfied with a government which had favoured them with so merciful a punishment.

Paul hid from all others the secret of his attachment for the little Pauline. He felt how little they could enter into the pure tenderness which *he* had for her, and he could not have borne a

frivolous or indifferent word on the subject. Helmsstatt, his only confidant, had been compelled by this sensitiveness to forbear all remarks; but he had felt it his duty to admit the uncle of his inconsiderate friend into the secret of this strange sort of engagement.

Paul from time to time exchanged letters with Frau Hiller, but the want of delicacy of feeling and the half-educated mind which exhibited themselves in these epistles, made the correspondence with the proposed mother-in-law extremely painful to him. He comforted himself, however, with the belief that his fair dove, a favourite of Nature, would certainly rise with unsoiled wings over the dust of common every-day life.

The close of his captivity was now drawing near. How much he longed, before returning home, to fly once more to Gugelfingen, that he might see the sweet girl again! How he wished that he could only whisper in her ear one little word about his affection, about his hope; a little grain of golden seed that should yield some day a blessed harvest! Three days before the period of release, his uncle and aunt came from Prussia to see him; the aunt embraced him with motherly love, and the uncle also, having long ago satisfied his own sense of duty by his fatherly admonitions, suffered his affection for his thoughtless nephew to take its free course.

"Well now," he said, "I should think you have sown your wild oats long enough, and eaten up all

the porridge of your own making. I hope your studies will go on all the better for this cooling down of your blood."

Paul made fair promises for the future. He heartily rejoiced at this re-union with his faithful and kind relatives, and he acknowledged their love with filial gratitude ; but how could he contrive to get another sight of Pauline ?

"To-morrow, then, you will be free," said the uncle ; "the carriage is already ordered to convey us to the next post-station. So we will take ourselves off without sound of drum or trumpet as quickly as possible."

"Certainly, uncle," said Paul ; "but I just wished to make a little excursion to Gugelfingen before leaving this neighbourhood. I shall be back by to-morrow evening."

"To Gugelfingen ! what on earth can you have to do in that out-of-the-world place ?" said his uncle. "All your debts there are fully discharged ; fines, doctor's bills, law-expenses—you will find all clearly stated when I lay my trustee-accounts before you. You've nothing to boast of over yonder, and you can't want to study nature any more ; I think you have had quite enough opportunities of making a full survey of Swabia, both from below and by means of a bird's-eye view from above. No, young man, we have you now, and I shall not let you travel about the country any more by yourself."

"Really, though, I must go, uncle ; I have, I

assure you, experienced much friendship from the family of the prison-sergeant," stammered out Paul, his face glowing like crimson. Of this the uncle took not the slightest notice.

"Ah! indeed; from Frau Hiller, I suppose," he said; "the lady who wrote such elegant little letters to your aunt. Well, I assure you she took care to bring all her own services sufficiently to light, and your aunt has acknowledged them very thankfully and substantially; so you may feel quite satisfied on that point."

"I should very much like to," said Paul, with much embarrassment.

"Well, then," said his uncle, "if you absolutely must go, I will persuade your aunt to join us, and we will all make the excursion together."

Now, this was certainly not exactly what Paul wished for, although he quite believed that the sight of Pauline's loveliness and artlessness must at once win all hearts and silence all scruples, yet he could not find courage to acquaint his uncle and aunt with his secret beforehand; and how could he enter Pauline's family circle, after having assured the mother that he was really quite independent, and that no hindrances need be feared on the part of his relations?

The uncle very well understood all this loitering and indecision. Clapping him on the shoulder, he said good-humouredly—

"Now, Paul, do you know when I, if I were in your place, should like to re-appear on the scene

of such an inglorious adventure? It would be, then, when you have, by God's blessing on your own endeavours, made a firm footing in life—when you can say to people there, 'See, the headstrong boy has for all this turned out an honest man ;'—then, but not before."

Paul saw that his uncle was right; he felt that he could, under such circumstances, go to meet his little Pauline in quite another fashion. So he restrained his feelings, although on the morning of his departure he cast a lingering, longing look into the distance, towards

"The house in the dale that sheltered his love,"

and hummed a love-song to himself as he slowly wandered down the mountain.

The Scripture tells us of the patriarch Jacob that he had to serve seven years for the beautiful Rachel, and "they seemed to him but as a few days for the love he bore unto her." According to modern notions this feeling of his would have been regarded but as a sorry proof of love; each of the seven years—yes, every day of the seven years—should, according to the idea of these times, have seemed as an eternity. I, however, have always delighted in the strong and healthy love of the patriarch, who could bestow on the woman dearest to him all his highest and best, and could spend, for her sake, the strength and gladness of his youth without one word of regret. Such strong love is indeed rare *in these times of excitement, when a young man*

cannot even feel certain that his love will hold out without drawing back, even through a three years' betrothal.

Paul Birken, however, had better confidence in himself and in the strength of his attachment; above all, he felt sure that his darling must grow up to be good and happy in spite of fortune; but he could not at first think how he could endure to pass whole years without even seeing her, and without watching her lovely unfolding at every stage of life. Yet he was perfectly aware that he must, above all, obtain a firm position in life, and acquire much experience, ere he could venture to become the centre of happiness to another. The bitterly-repenting excesses of one single day had entailed on him the most tormenting after-thoughts, and he knew that he could only overcome them by hard work. He had pretty well, as the proverb goes, "worn out his student's shoes;" and he was glad to be able to complete his studies in Berlin, where all the peculiarities of the student-life become obliterated in the busy commotion of a large city.

Paul's uncle had every reason to be satisfied with his diligence. He not only felt in secret half-reconciled to the imprisonment which had been of so much efficacy in cooling down his nephew, but even had a kindly thought for the young Swabian maiden, who also, as the far-off reward of his exertions, had been the means of spurring him on to such strenuous endeavours. In and for itself indeed the uncle naturally deemed the whole affair

a piece of folly, which if he steadily persisted in ignoring, would in the course of time come of itself to an end.

"I am very thankful that you gave me that information, and made me cautious," said the uncle to Helmstatt one day, when the latter was just departing for his distant home, and was worrying himself with painful scruples as to whether, in his well-meant sympathy with the uncle, he had not been guilty of treachery to his friend ; "but be sure that you do not encourage him at all to any confession of his feelings. It is much better that affairs like that should die out of themselves than that it should come to an outbreak ; and pray let my wife know nothing about it. She is now and then a little infected with romantic ideas, and she would very likely be anxious to educate the girl for him, which, by the way, she is quite competent to do."

"Now, that would be the very best thing that could be done, I should think," said Helmstatt.

"Oh, preserve me from that !" he replied. "Such attempts always fail most miserably. My grandmother at one time adopted a gipsy child, who as soon as she was grown up decamped with the whole of the family plate to the freedom of the woods."

"Well, there is no fear of that in this case," said Helmstatt, laughing ; "this child is good and lady-like, and bids fair to be a beauty. And now, Councillor, if your good lady would only undertake *her* education, who knows——"

"No, oh no! I entreat you, say nothing about it!" said the uncle, quite alarmed. "It is altogether unnecessary, and we might in the end do the worst possible thing for the youth himself. Do consider how much young men change in their opinions and likings."

"But his word?" Helmstatt remarked, hesitatingly.

"Well, who in all the world," said the uncle, "would count as binding the word that a boy gives to a child, and not even to the child herself. The mother who took advantage of his youthful folly and unfortunate position can certainly have no right to complain if her speculation fails; and if the girl turns out as beautiful as you think, then it will be no loss to her any way if she never sees my nephew again. In short, for the present it is far better to leave the thing alone—let it take its course: if the fever passes away without any consequences, so much the better. Even in the worst case—but there, we will not begin a tragedy. Meantime, I shall be glad if I never hear more of the affair."

Paul felt by no means tempted to open his heart to his uncle, for he understood too well his practical, sober views of life to expect sympathy in so much romance. With his aunt he felt differently. She ways seemed to him to be nearer his own age, the fresh and youthful feelings of her nature had gone with her on to middle life; but on the other hand, he felt afraid of her roguish eyes, and the ironical smile, and the playful banter, by means of which she had already acquired over the

youth a greater influence than she could have effected by grave remonstrance. Even he himself could see on how many sides the airy fabric of his hopes was assailable, and he scarcely knew how to lay the matter before another in a clear and intelligible manner so he kept his sweet secret all to himself, and built in silence his castles in the air.

Frau Hiller had too much experience of the world to found very sanguine hopes on the word of a student, yet she felt desirous of keeping the matter in abeyance as a second string to her bow, or as "double milk," as they say in Swabia—a promise which might be pleaded in case of need. She was not a mother of delicate feelings, yet she was not without principle. The youthfulness and unsophisticated feelings of her child were sacred in her eyes, and therefore for some time Pauline was not allowed to know that she was thus betrothed. The mamma herself—who, having been the daughter of a schoolmaster, felt somewhat vain of her ready pen—maintained a correspondence with Paul, in order to keep the flame alive. Papa Hiller was not at present to know anything of the matter, and was, whenever the proper time came round, to be surprised at the prospect of having so distinguished a son-in-law.

Paul was not particularly edified by the accomplished letters of the mamma, which were always full of praises of her own performances in conducting the education of Pauline. She boasted that *she* had already taught her to embroider and to



crochet beautifully, and that just now an excellent opportunity was offered for her learning French, as a very accomplished old vagrant happened to be in the prison who had formerly been in Algiers, and was therefore a perfect master of the French language. Paul's remarks on this subject, however, induced her to defer the French instruction for the present, as he wished to reserve for himself the pleasure of giving this necessary part of culture to Pauline. He relied much on the sweet natural character which so plainly expressed itself in her lovely countenance, and he trusted to find her again unspoiled and unharmed by the deteriorating influences around her.

At length Birken had completed his studies. The results of his examination exceeded his uncle's most sanguine expectations, and on the joyous evening kept as a festival in his honour Paul found courage to say to his uncle that before entering on any permanent occupation he must take a little journey into Swabia.

"What for, my lad?" said his uncle. "With all due respect for your great progress in learning, yet methinks the time which you and I talked of is not yet come, when you, as a man of established character, can again visit the scene of your folly."

"Uncle," began Paul, with much solemnity of manner, "I have something to communicate to you."

"Thank you, thank you, greatly obliged," said the latter, shaking his head; "I would rather decline it: too much knowledge gives one the headache."

Come, Paul," he added, gravely, "we will make a bargain. You give me your word not to go into Swabia for the next three years, and I give you mine that after these three years are expired, and when your judgment has become more matured, I will put no obstacle in the way of your wishes."

Paul looked at his uncle in surprise and embarrassment. He could not tell how much he understood of his affairs, yet in face of his cool and determined manner he had not courage to come to a decided explanation. So he took the offered hand, not knowing rightly whether in so doing he was committing a treachery towards his unsuspecting love, or whether by this self-denial he was paving the way for their future union.

In her next letter to Paul Frau Hiller hinted that it was now about time to communicate to Pauliné the plan which had been prepared for her future life. "She is indeed exceedingly attached to you," she wrote; "but as she is growing so wonderfully attractive, indeed I may say beautiful, it is by no means impossible that she may excite some admiration in others; and though we have not had the pleasure of seeing you here, as I certainly expected, yet it would be very desirable for my little Pauline to know what she is to look for."

Now this was exactly what Paul was longing after; he wished to turn from the thorn that was guarding his little rose to the rose-bud herself; and *this* led to the writing of his first love-letter. How

often and how much had he, in imagination, written to her before now—long, affectionate letters, too; at length his words were to be allowed to well forth like a stream too long pent up.

“My sweet love,” he began—but no! how could he as yet dare to call her his love? Ought he not to suffer the flower gradually to unfold itself? ought he not gradually to woo and win her? “My charming Rosebud,” he again began; but no! Pauline was so simple-hearted, so entirely a child of nature, and never used to language of this sort. “Dear Pauline,” he chose at last; and now transporting himself completely into bygone times he adopted an almost fatherly tone towards her. He did not attempt to read the letter through again; he did not feel able to do it; indeed he feared that if he did so it would be torn up, like many previous letters. So he sent it off *vogue la galère*, and Pauline’s answer to this would indicate what tone his correspondence with her should assume.

It was his aunt’s birthday, and Paul had spent the whole day at his uncle’s house, quite absorbed in all sorts of thoughts, and dreams, and memories. He was sitting by the window in the dusk of evening, when the maid brought him a letter which had been carried in the afternoon to his lodgings. It was a neat little note on rose-coloured paper, and he opened the window that he might see to read it. Just then his aunt coming in with the lighted lamp, said to him reprovingly, “Ah, Paul! who is it that is going to destroy his eye-

sight?" and Paul, as confused as if he were some boy suddenly detected in naughtiness, quickly pushed the little letter under his aunt's work-basket till he could find an opportunity of drawing it forth again. But the means of doing this did not occur so readily as he imagined, for his uncle had invited a few friends to spend the evening, and they soon assembled themselves round the tea-table. His aunt was in the highest spirits, and her friends were of an age at which ladies can without danger of misapprehension keep a young man continually in conversation, and they did not leave him free for a moment. Not till he was just on the point of quitting the house for his home did he see the possibility of recovering his treasure; though meantime he had kept strict guard, at least with his eyes, over the spot where it lay. At length the time for separation came, though even now gallantry compelled him, before he could go to his own little room, to escort to her home Mademoiselle Bichette, a lady who had once been his governess, and was now his true friend. And even when there how many times the vesta matches refused to kindle, and how long it was before he could get a light! He really might have set the house on fire by the mass which he had heaped together to make sure of no more failures.

But at last Paul sat down and unfolded the letter, which was already opened. He was most pleasantly surprised by the clear, fine strokes of the pen, so firm and even, yet so delicate, so ex-

quisitely feminine. No, his heart had not deceived him—this handwriting convinced him at once of the truth of all that he had dared to hope or wish respecting his distant love—convinced him far more surely than if even *The Leipsic Illustrated* had set forth fully all that concerned them both in coming days.

“Dear honoured friend,” the letter began. “Rather more respectful than need be,” he said to himself, smiling. “Without delay, and with heartfelt thanks, I accept the home which your kindness offers me.” “That’s going rather fast, though,” thought he, with some astonishment. He had never yet said a word to the young girl about the future. “I again recognise in this the guidance of that faithful Father who has of late led me forward amid so many new and difficult paths.” “Oh, the poor girl! what can have happened to her?” he said, anxiously. “I have just settled all here,” the letter continued, “and I can come to you on any day which you yourself can appoint for me.” “Well, this may be called overtopping the boldest expectations!” thought Paul, quite embarrassed. “Are her parents dead, then? and what in the world could I do with a young girl here?” He walked up and down his little room half-desperate at this unlooked-for stroke of fortune. But at any rate he must finish the letter:—“The presence of your dear wife”—“What! my wife, too, already!” he said, quite disconcerted.—“was

to me, even from childhood upwards, a vision of joy and happiness; and as in former and happier days I returned from your hospitable house to my darling mother, so now I come from my mother's grave to the new home thus opened for me. I hope I may be able to fulfil my heart's desire in expressing, as far as can be, my sense of gratitude to you for this best of gifts by deeds rather than words. I remain, with child-like love and respect, yours,

“MATILDA SODEN.”

“Well, I am indeed thankful to see the signature of another name than hers,” sighed Paul, really relieved, for he had seemed for some minutes past like one bewitched. He looked at the outside of the letter. Ah yes! it was addressed to his uncle; and besides, it was written on white paper, and Pauline's little note had been rose-coloured. Then he began to think who the unknown Matilda could be, and he suddenly recollected that his aunt had lately frequently talked of a god-daughter of hers, the child of a very dear cousin who had been the friend of her youth, and he recalled the fact that this young lady had by the sudden death of her mother been left wholly an orphan. This letter then must be from her, and now, if he could only get his own! The letter he had read was certainly very prettily written; he only wished that Pauline's might turn out to be as well written and expressed. And now by what piece of good management was he to get it at all?

He went to his aunt's house very early next morning. He had never before shown himself so wonderfully attentive in making inquiries after her health; but there was his uncle—yes, his uncle—lounging, even at this early hour, in the window-seat, and busying himself by turning over the contents of his wife's little work-basket. Now, this was a thing he was never before known to do, for he had a morbid dread of needles, and seemed to be possessed by a firm idea that any man who only sets eyes on a woman's working implements is in imminent danger of swallowing a needle, and thereby coming to a miserable death, the like misfortune having happened to several little Nellys and Jennys whose lives are written in story-books as a salutary warning to children.

"I think, uncle, we have by a blunder exchanged letters," said Paul, with well-feigned indifference, as he offered him the little note.

"Indeed! that is a very dangerous thing," said his uncle, smiling, and handing him the little rose-coloured billet, which looked just as he had left it; "only surrender that which you perfidiously stole: it contains no secret, though indeed it has brought a surprise for your aunt which will prove most welcome."

Matilda's letter was now handed to the aunt, who read it in glad astonishment.

"Really you are indeed kind," she said, greatly moved, and throwing herself on her husband's neck, who was a little embarrassed by this move-



ment of hers, having by no means a taste for sensation scenes. "Now indeed you have anticipated my secret wish. I did not venture to ask it of you, because I know how reluctant you always are to allow any intrusion into our home circle."

"Well, that is true, but Matilda was always a nice, quiet, pleasant child," said the husband, drawing back, "and I should pity her if she fell into the hands of that trading uncle of hers, and became an object of speculation. Really a rich girl in her lonely position is almost worse off than a poor one, who is naturally obliged to seek a dependent situation, and thus becomes placed under the care of others. Then too she plays a good game at chess, and she used to arrange all your matters of dress so cleverly, and she would read the paper so prettily in the afternoons while I used to fall asleep over it."

While the uncle and aunt talked till they were tired of all the excellences of the invisible Matilda, Paul was fortunately able to slip away with his rose-coloured letter. The penmanship, to be sure, had not the clear, fair character of the first letter: the pink paper had been ruled, though the traces of this were carefully obliterated by india-rubber. Indeed, the hand was rather like that of a school-girl, and the letter written with great care and precision; but all that only made it more innocent and touching:—

"DEAR HERR BIRKEN,

"I shall be glad if my letter finds you quite

well; we too are all in good health. I was very much astonished to find by your letter that you still think of us and of me, which I cannot yet quite believe, as I was so very young when you were here, and I have never thought of such a thing. And I rest in the hope that God, in His goodness, will direct all for the best. For myself, I can indeed say nothing at all, as it is so long since we saw each other, and since then you must have known many accomplished ladies. But I always rejoice and thank God whenever I see the vineyard-keeper, who came to-day for the first time this season to the cattle-market. I am so glad that he got quite well again, and that you have nothing more on your conscience. Father and mother and Clara and all of us send you our best respects.

“Your obedient servant,

“PAULINE HILLER.”

“What sweet humility!” thought Paul. “Poor girl, it is natural that her letter should be a little stiff and constrained; I must be very gentle and considerate with her; the bud must unfold itself by degrees.” But it was not without great effort that he could recall the image of the lovely child, for he found it difficult to make the letter agree with his ideal.

Paul was truly glad that the little rose-coloured note passed without further notice from his uncle. His aunt was busily occupied in preparing a little room for her god-child, and the uncle kept to his usual convenient policy of *laissez aller*.

It was not an event of any importance to Birken when Matilda Soden arrived ; and the quiet young maiden, clad in her deep mourning, settled herself into the little household circle so imperceptibly that after a time it seemed as if she had always been there. Paul, who at first had some suspicion that his aunt had designs on him respecting her god-daughter, felt somewhat inclined to call her merits in question, and one day said to his uncle, " Well, she is a negative sort of a girl : she is neither fair nor dark, neither short nor tall, not rosy and not pale ; she is not beautiful and not ugly. She is by no means a dangerous sort of person."

" So much the better," said his uncle, " for you do not seem any way dangerous to her."

The aunt felt very happy in the society of her young adopted daughter ; and the servants, who at first had regarded the interloper with mistrustful eyes, soon became desperately fond of her. There was a quiet harmony throughout Matilda's character which imperceptibly exercised a beneficial influence on all about her. There was an end now of those every-day petty annoyances, little household matters which had been forgotten ; the flowers were daily watered, the canary-bird duly fed, the ivy* dusted—everything done so quietly one might have fancied the fairies with invisible hands had been there.

* The ivy is in many parts of Germany a common in-doors ornament, and is made to grow around pianos, window-seats, and doorways in very graceful wreaths and festoons.

For some time Matilda seemed surrounded by that unseen wall which grief sets up about a human heart. When first a great sorrow falls upon us, life seems a burden hardly to be borne. As we rise gradually from its depths, and begin to discern clearly the rod which threatened to crush us, we learn by imperceptible degrees not only that it tends to lead us in the path to Heaven, but we learn anew to take pleasure in the path itself—the road of our daily life. Well and good is it for us if indeed we do not once more find the way so pleasant as to forget that goal which we at first desired with such impatient longing.

Matilda never made her sorrow a burden to others. Her grief was like her whole nature, unobtrusive; but the strong sense of duty which had become an instinct with her, taught her to be ever attentive to the wishes of those around. She was surprised to find that by degrees life was gently and gradually knocking at the door of her own heart by means of a thousand little messengers, and she opened it softly—softly, to let the gentle envoys in. The bright sunshine was no longer distressing to her eyes, she no more thought on every bright, clear morning of that sad day when she had tenderly wrapped the form of her mother in the grave-clothes. She ceased to occupy her time in writing out all the poetry which seemed by its tender lament to attune itself to her own sorrows. *Her dark eyes came to beam more brightly, a soft, kind smile played about her mouth, and her*



returning cheerfulness was a joy for all, especially for the aunt. It seemed a happy result of the family intercourse, and became a source of peaceful triumph to all the household.

Paul had long ago forgotten his suspicions. Safe in his self-consciousness of faithfulness to the far-away Swabian maiden, with whom he now corresponded regularly, he resigned himself quite innocently to the pleasure which had come to them all in their intercourse with a spirit so peaceful and kindly. He never confessed to himself how much more attractive his uncle's house had lately become to him, nor how pleasant were those evening readings, while Matilda's calm eyes looked approval, how surprisingly his taste often agreed with hers, nor how it was that the long period of waiting, which once seemed so intolerable, had of late appeared wonderfully short. He never asked his heart whether it was indeed owing to the strength of that love which he bore for the distant beautiful Rachel that he waited and worked on so patiently.

Five years had gone by since that eventful autumn had reddened the foliage of the landscape, when again a stranger was walking in the lovely, secluded path by the river that leads to the small town of Gugelfingen. This time he was a solitary wanderer, and his simple and suitable travelling dress was not adapted to draw upon him the eyes of the inhabitants as did in other days the fantastic student-costume. Neither did the stranger seem to court attention or wish to excite remark. He

turned into an inn which had been recently built, and where he might hope that the new occupants would not recognise the wild student whose adventure was even now talked over in the little town.

It was Paul Birken, who, after all this long interval, returned to the place where his mad, boyish humour had first turned his life into a reality in the home of his first love.

Paul had in those days been rather a thoughtless boy than a youth, and now he almost seemed grave and thoughtful beyond his years, as he glanced anxiously up the streets which in former days he had merrily marched through with his friend. After a short rest at the inn he turned into a back way once so familiar when he was a prisoner there, and endeavoured to walk on without observation to the last house, the mysteries of which he had at that time found so interesting.

And why was it that Paul sought in so secret and stealthy a way the dwelling to which he had now come again as the faithful knight who is to carry off his love in triumph? He had himself perhaps scarcely a distinct idea of his reason for doing so; but it arose from a half-fear, a slight misgiving which would arise in his heart occasionally now that he was really about to take the decisive step. He wished most earnestly that he could once more see Pauline unrecognised and alone, *that he could only take one look and judge for himself whether the fully-opened flower*

still resembled the early bud, before he publicly claimed her as his own, and bore her away to his home as his wedded wife.

Paul had been fortunate in choosing this very day for his coming. It was a day of general holiday on account of an agricultural festival which was taking place in the neighbourhood, and which had drawn thither almost the whole population of the little town, so he could pass unseen along the green lane behind the old town-wall leading to the last house. But his steps bore no sign of the hasty, vehement impatience of a lover. He walked on slowly and thoughtfully, and felt as if some undefined reluctance drew him back from the fulfilment of the earnest desire of his early youth.

There was a stone bench about half-way up the green path, and here Paul sat down, and opening a well-filled pocket-book, began to look over its contents. The first thing which he took out was a portrait, a badly-painted miniature which Pauline had sent him two years before. Though the picture was very poor as a work of art, and was but a daub of red and white, yet none who looked at it could doubt that the original was a beautiful girl; and yet Paul could not as he gazed on it feel that it recalled any of the old emotions which were once awakened at the sight of his sweet rose-bud.

The young man proceeded to unfold a series of letters on pink, green, and sky-blue papers. They were Pauline's letters, and they were not all in the style of that school-girl-like epistle which he re-

ceived first, and which he had even almost forgotten; yet something of shyness and formality was always perceptible in the neat characters, shaped with so much care, as well as in the whole tone of the composition. She wrote about her works and studies, and the results did not seem very important; she told him about the little garden, and gave details of the prisoners who, one after another, had become inmates of the house. They were letters which she might very well have written to her godfather.

Naturally enough Paul did not himself know, after so long an absence, what tone he ought to adopt towards her. How could he tell how she, who had been separated from him ever since she was little more than a child, would feel now in the prospect of becoming his bride?

In his last letter he had prepared her for his early arrival, and now he once more read over her answer. It was written with that modest reserve and that avoidance of every tender word which had always pleased him by its delicacy. The concluding words were, "My parents and all here rejoice to hear that you are coming, and it is my daily prayer that our Father in Heaven may guide us both into the way which will be best for us." This maidenly timidity and gentle anxiety touched Paul's heart. "Your trust in me shall never be disappointed," he said to himself as he rose with a firm and determined step to go on. "Even if I cannot now bring back to you the warm, impetuous

feelings of a young heart full of affection, I will never have plucked this bud in wilful sport, and spoiled it for future bloom."

In the other side of the pocket-book lay one single letter—a letter in the same clear, firm, woman's handwriting as that which had once long ago so surprised him. It was an unopened letter. His hand trembled when he would fain have broken the seal, and he put it back in the pocket-book still unclosed. He feared to open it because he did not know but that it might contain the sacred confidences of a noble and tender heart—a heart on which he had no claim, but which he esteemed as a pearl beyond all price.

Paul walked on quickly, forcibly shaking off all tendencies to brooding and reflection, and went forward unknown and uninterrupted till he reached the Last House. Many strange feelings came and went as he glanced again at the white walls and the barred windows rising up among the green trees of the little garden. The house looked quite silent and deserted, but he could hear girls' voices in the garden, and that of Pauline among them. That was just as he had wished. His desire was to see and hear her before she observed him.

The shrubs which bounded the back of the garden were so high and thick that Paul could easily watch the two girls, and could listen to their conversation without their knowledge, and he considered himself justified in doing so. He could see very plainly the face of one unknown to him;

it was an extremely common-place countenance; the other maiden had her back to him—that must be Pauline. He was glad when he felt the beating of his heart. Yes, the old love could come back.

“Does it not vex you,” asked the former girl, “that your sister Clara is allowed to go everywhere, and you are always obliged to stay at home?”

“Oh no,” replied Pauline’s sweet-toned voice, “I do not care so much about that. It is, to be sure, a vexatious thing that I have to remain here just because there is one woman in the prison; but it will suit me quite as well if I can only get my white dress finished all ready for Sunday.”

“Are you making full sleeves?”

“Open sleeves,” answered Pauline, with great decision, “trimmed with narrow lace; but not a plain bodice. I don’t like Clara’s at all.”

“But don’t make the bodice so high up in the neck next time,” said the other.

“I don’t know how I shall make it,” answered Pauline, thoughtfully. “After all, I think it will look better with a ruche all round the top than if I wore a chemisette with it.”

The discourse proceeded in this way, with much earnest discussion about matters of dress, till Pauline rose to go away, saying she must go and warm the soup for the prisoner. And now Birken saw her face. She was beautiful! The blooming rose-bud had not promised too much. Her maiden

figure was of slender symmetry, and the eyes shone with the pure blue of the skies. The delicately-formed mouth, and the tender bloom on her cheeks, were more charming in the reality than they seemed even in the picture drawn by memory. And yet he did not go on to greet his love, and to take possession of the jewel that had been so carefully preserved for him. He turned away immediately; and in order that he might not be seen by the girls as they entered the house on the other side, he walked with restless and unsteady step up and down the path, which now seemed more lonely than ever.

Paul hardly knew how to account to himself for his inconsistency of feeling, or how it was that even this fresh ebullition of admiration for the young maiden subsided all at once as if cold water had been thrown upon it. Was she not even more beautiful than he ever could have imagined? Could it be that her words, this accidental unmeaning talk, had quenched all his fire? Did not all girls, even intellectual, highly-accomplished girls, talk at times about such things? But he had fancied that the first words from her mouth were to sound in his ears like the words of an oracle, and now it was only talk like this.

Paul had gone back again to the stone bench; he sat down and drew forth the still unopened letter for the second time, and now he broke the seal hastily, as if he should find the right decision in that letter. And then there rose up before him

imagination, even as it were in the very presence of the love of his youth, another form, not so tall or slender, or blooming in such morning freshness, and yet so charming in her soft, serious smile, and in the clear eyes which revealed the character of one who had first taught him the true meaning of life, and awakened in him some sense of its responsibilities and duties. Yes, the picture which was then present to him was one of truest womanhood, the pure casket of a noble and religious spirit.

Paul had long felt the spell of that generous nature, and seen that she was the calm light of the domestic hearth, the unpretending ornament of the social circle, the unwearied ministering angel of the sick and suffering. Her sensible and gentle conversation, her penetrating look, had been the means of calling into existence all that now was best and noblest in his character ; and yet, on the other hand, she had looked up with childlike modesty to the profounder strength and the greater knowledge which he possessed as man ; for never is a woman attractive to a man if he feels when in her presence that his manhood is not recognised and honoured ; whereas the true-hearted woman feels in a still greater degree the deep need of that manly power and superiority in him who is to counsel and support her. Even the most charming and beautiful girl could not dispossess Paul's mind of a picture like this.

Birken was soon absorbed in the contents of the letter. It began :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

"I thank you with my whole heart for your confidence, which I will hold sacred, and so far as the insight and means of a weak girl will enable me to do, I will prove such a friend as you expect to find me. But, dear Paul, friends must be open with one another. I have ever sought, nay, indeed, I have ever found it a positive necessity, to understand very distinctly the position in which I stand in all my intimacies with others. I wish clearly to ascertain it, even though the study to do so is sometimes dark and difficult, and I wish to see it all in the true and right light—though this may not be the light of earth.

"You must not misunderstand me, therefore, my dear friend, if I translate into plain language all the vehement self-accusations, exclamations, and entreaties of your letter, even though I should say some things which the lip or pen of a maiden is unwilling to utter. You know I have no mother, and I have been early obliged to learn how to think and speak for myself; and I must especially do so in the case in point, because your aunt's partiality for me would render it impossible for her to give a fair judgment on the matter.

"You once in your early youth pledged your promise and your truth. This I know from your uncle, but it seems that even he never knew or guessed the reality, or full significance of that promise, and that he regarded it all as a youthful fancy, long since passed away.

"You have not seen your betrothed since she was a child, but with me you have lived under the same roof for the last three years, and you have learned, partly through your aunt, to judge me with the partial eyes of affection, and now you think you could find a happiness with me of which you do not feel quite so certain with your betrothed. You fear you may have shown and spoken out your affection for me more plainly than becomes a man whose hand is already promised, and it is all this which now throws you into a conflict between wishes and duties—a conflict which you think you can escape only by going rashly to take the chance of what may next occur. Before doing this, you beg my forgiveness if you have disturbed my peace. Now, have I not rightly understood the meaning of your letter?

"And now, before I enter farther on this subject, I beg you to receive my most solemn assurance that if I have anything to forgive you, then it is quite forgiven from my inmost heart. Believe me that not one sorrow of all my life has ever befallen me which I have not, sooner or later, been able to recognise as a blessing sent from God, though indeed scalding tears may first have fallen from my eyes. Should you unknowingly and unintentionally have caused me sorrow of heart, then be assured that even tears of this kind will only enable me in the end to see more clearly the sacred meaning that lies in and beyond every woe, even though it comes to us through the hand of man.



"And now do not, I entreat, go to the fulfilment of so sacred a promise as if to a fatal necessity. This surely would be the most wretched thought of any which is now disturbing you. In such a thought lies the germ of all guilt and evil. How could it well be otherwise? Let us think rather that He who has permitted these things to happen is choosing for us that which is best. This thought only will rouse all our strength and bring us peace.

"Your duty seems quite plain in my eyes. You were young when you so sacredly pledged your word, but not too young to understand its deep importance. The young girl has learnt to regard herself as your destined bride. She has given the bloom of her youth to a preparation for a future life different from that which her position in society would have betokened. So long as she remains waiting for you, and is pure and blameless in character, so long her claims on you are sacred. Do not then take to her a divided heart, dear Paul. You are answerable for a full portion of love and faith to a young and gentle woman in whose heart you have awakened a deep feeling. But you will ask—'Can we love, or not love, just according to our wishes?' Ah! no, dear Paul, I think not. But as we may overcome and hallow a love which comes stealing over us, just as spring comes over the earth, and yet if it be not God's will to lead us to the goal we may learn to regard that beloved one in the possession of another without repining; so also there is a love which we may obtain as a

noble gift from God, and such love, dear friend, is surely to be had if sought with honest purpose.

"Now, laugh as you please at your sage old mistress; let us hope that all advice will in this case prove superfluous, that you will again find your young bud now expanded into a sweet rose, the sight of which will rekindle all the warmth of the first love in your heart, and that you will experience all that happiness which a man must find in true womanly sympathy and affection. And if it be so, if the hour has arrived when you are to realize the aspirations of your early manhood, believe me that, far from lamenting it, your happiness will rejoice the inmost soul of your friend,

"MATILDA SODEN."

"Yes, she is indeed a friend," Paul said, with a sigh, as he folded up the letter—"a pearl which I have trifled with and lost."

His conscience, however, felt relieved by this assurance of Matilda's forgiveness. He had indeed gladly resigned himself for a long time past to the sweet unconscious charm of her conversation—longer truly than had been good for him, much as he had enjoyed it. He had at times felt that he was not acting wisely, but he fancied that to one of Matilda's grave and peaceful nature there could be no danger at all in such intimacy. It was only recently that he had distinctly been aware how much she had become to him. He had perceived also that her manner was not cold towards him as

in their earlier acquaintance, and then came the thought that he had committed a grievous wrong in disturbing the peace of so tranquil a spirit. His conscience was lightened by her letter, but his heart grew heavier as it became evident to him that his affection would not have been a hopeless one.

Had Paul come back to the little town really in earnest to redeem his word, or was it in the secret hope of finding some loophole through which he might escape with honour? Who can tell? or who can judge him? Every man has his acknowledged and unacknowledged thoughts. This one thing at least was apparent—that nothing which had occurred in this place had been such as to free him from the promise which he had plighted when he gave the ring that he wore for his mother, even though Pauline had chattered for a whole quarter of an hour about the pattern of a dress.

When the traveller went back to the inn everybody was surprised that he had not gone to the agricultural feast. The hostess felt half-angry with him, for she had particularly requested him to take notice of two sheep and a pig with ten young ones which her husband had sent as his contribution to the festival, and she had with her own hand adorned the little curly tails of the pigs with bows of rose-coloured ribbon. She was fully intent, however, on indemnifying herself for the slight shown to the feast by a conversation with the stranger, and the latter soon found it easy for him to turn the discourse on the female beauties of the town.

"Yes, we have very fine women here," she answered to one of his remarks. "There is, for instance, the rector's daughter, a stately damsel; and the apothecary's daughter, too, though she is not exactly handsome, is tolerably rich. Then the high bailiff has two, one pretty and one quite plain. There are lasses enough! When we have a ball the worst scarcity is that of gentlemen."

"Well, which of them all now do you consider is the belle of the place?" said Paul.

"As far as my opinion goes, I should say," she replied, "it is the prison-sergeant's daughter—that Pauline of his, who outshines them all. Many strangers who have been here have been struck with admiration of her beauty."

"And pray is such a beauty as the one you describe still disengaged?" asked Paul, with a little beating of the heart.

"That's as it may be," said the hostess. "They do say she is engaged to a gentleman of distinction who came out of Prussian Poland or Polish Prussia, and who was once put in arrest here before we came to live in this place. I think that's nothing very grand—one who was here in prison! However, the sergeant's wife makes a grand parade of it, and says he didn't steal anything—only almost killed somebody. I don't know why that's to be considered a very distinguished action; for my part, *I would much rather be robbed by anyone than stabbed, but people have different tastes; and if*

the gentleman is anything like, I fear he'll let her bide, and the sergeant's wife has waited in vain; and she has dressed the girl out so unconscionably just for nothing at all."

"Has she never seemed likely to marry anyone else?" asked Paul.

"Oh! to be sure she has! Why shouldn't she, a young girl like that? There's the bricklayer's son Adolf, who has now got his father's business, wanted to have her, and that's a very genteel family; they have a sofa, and the old gentleman wears a chintz dressing-gown. You know bricklayers are always above the common. But, somehow, the mother and the girl let him slip through. The sergeant, as he is called, is just nobody at home. Then I have many a time and often seen the actuary peering after her; but she'll have nothing to say to him, I can see, and I don't blame her for that. My barmaid is good enough for such as he."

Paul had been kept duly informed by Frau Hiller of all the probable and actual offers which Pauline might have accepted had she chosen to do so; always connected with a firm assurance on her part that her daughter would listen to none, because she had so set her heart upon him.

The young man was glad when his chattering hostess was called away, but he got her first to point out to him the road which led to the spot on which the feast was being held, though he soon turned back again into the lonely green pathway where

he might quietly reflect and come to some clear understanding of his own heart, and think over in what way he had better pursue the course which now lay plainly before him.

It is true that again and again there came into his mind some thoughts of what was due to his own better self, and of the need which there was for his own mental development and improvement—a need which at times seemed to him far above the trifling consideration of a boyish promise. But he had now ascertained what Matilda thought of such sophistical and self-flattering excuses, and “every man to his word” was, he knew, and at length felt, the simplest solution, though it was not the easiest path for him.

The opinion of the world, too, was very differently estimated by Paul in the fixed position of his manhood than when amid the presumptuous feelings of his youth. And now that he had again seen Pauline’s loveliness, he no longer feared the world’s judgment of the matter. He well knew that so much beauty as Pauline possessed would serve as an excuse for even a greater indiscretion than this. His uncle, too, would doubtless soon feel reconciled to so charming a young niece; and besides, he was now quite old enough to act for himself; and as he had faithfully kept the promise which he had made to his uncle, the latter was bound to offer no hindrance to his wishes.

Paul by degrees began to entertain better hopes of Pauline’s capability of improvement than he

had felt in the morning, while the impression of the conversation overheard in the garden had been so recent and powerful. Surely so interesting an exterior could not be wholly deceptive. That neat and pretty arrangement, too, of the little garden must have been the work of Pauline, and showed a good perception of taste and beauty: and yet he walked but slowly on.

The sun was near to setting as he for the second time approached the Last House. He could delay no longer, lest he should soon lose the opportunity of seeing Pauline alone, and he rather shrank from meeting the whole family together. He now felt in a grave and solemn mood of mind, certainly the proper mood for entering on so weighty a matter. He wished to take to his heart in all sincerity and kindness the timid dove who had during all these long years preserved for him the fair bloom of her youth, and had quietly waited and trusted. And Matilda! he well knew that she would prove a guiding and protecting friend to the young maiden; though this was a delicate point, on which, just at present, he did not much like to dwell.

At the back of the little garden, in the thick~~et~~, stood a small gate which Paul had never before observed, and as it was open he went in. He had no intention of playing the listener for the second time. He now fully intended to proceed in an open and straightforward manner, nor had he any longing to hear another conversation like that



which he had overheard in the morning. But Paul's footstep instinctively fell more lightly when he observed that two persons were seated in the thickly-covered arbour. The light dress of Pauline glimmered through the green branches, and the voice of the speaker at her side was this time the voice of a man, saying, in a tone of reproach, "What! will you not remain here with me just for one single quarter of an hour? I shall never, never more see you alone!"

"Oh, leave me, leave me," said the young girl, anxiously; "as long as we live we never can be united. You know all about it."

"Ah! what folly of your mother, Pauline," said the young man, "to think that you are to wait, year after year, for this distinguished bridegroom, who, for five whole years has never once been to look after you, and who, in my opinion, never means to come."

"Oh yes, he is certainly coming," said Pauline; "he has written regularly, and has sent me so many beautiful things, and this very day the landlord's Louisa at the Swan has quite frightened me, for she says a gentleman who is a stranger has been there, and he has asked so particularly about all the young ladies in the town. Now, suppose this were to be he?"

"And if it should be he," cried the young man, passionately and impatiently, "could you not just let me say this to him—Hark ye, sir, you can't care much for your betrothed, or else you would

have been to look after her in all these five years. But I have known her since we were both children, and have loved her up from that time till I came back from my travels ; and I love her now so dearly, oh ! so dearly, that I could lay down my life for her sake, so pray leave her to me ?”

“ Oh !” said Pauline, who all this time was silently shedding tears, “ that would make my mother so unhappy ; you know how much her heart is set on my making a grand marriage, especially as Clara has not done so.”

“ Well, how can this be called a grand marriage ?” said the young man. “ Herr Birken will be an assessor, or a counsellor, perhaps ; but I think, however, that a gardener is no such bad thing ; and now that I have inherited the business from my uncle, I am a free gentleman, as good as a baron. Look you, Pauline, if you have one of those lawyers—for lawyer he is—distinguished as you may consider his title, yet you must remember he’ll be the whole day away from you, and stick to his books and papers, with not so much as an hour to think of you. But what could be more delightful, especially now that I am master of such a beautiful garden, and do not depend on anyone, save on our Almighty Father, who grants me rain and sunshine, what would be pleasanter than for you to come out and stay there with me, and help me in all that I do, as long as you please ; and for me, when I am alone in my garden, to think

that the wife that I have at home is the fairest of all my flowers. Now, wouldn't you really like that better?"

"Oh, do not ask me," replied Pauline's voice, in tones so sweet and tender, that Paul could never, from what he overheard in the morning, have imagined that such sweet tones belonged to it. "You see it cannot be. I must follow my mother's wishes, and do what she has promised, and if I cannot be happy with my husband, yet I will be kind and good as becomes a virtuous bride, and ever keep a good conscience. You must not come any more, it is not right. Farewell, may God take care of you."

"Good evening, Pauline!" was suddenly uttered in an unfamiliar voice, in the midst of the passionate weeping of the young maiden, and Paul stepped into the arbour.

"Herr Birken!" cried Pauline, in a voice of alarm, which was certainly little flattering to him, but which, on the other hand, made his act of self-renunciation the easier. Paul lost no time in calming the fears of the young people by his kindly words, and so, without a duel, came to an explanation with the glad though somewhat crest-fallen young gardener. And when the happy pair walked with him out of the arbour, and the golden evening sunlight glistened on Pauline's fair hair, and shone into her blue eyes still moist with tears, Paul was fain to confess, with an increased sense of his

own generosity, that it was no common gift which he had resigned so nobly.

The surprise of the Hiller family was indeed great, when, at their return from the feast, they found that the bridegroom from Berlin, who had almost become a myth, was really in their house. Still greater was the astonishment of mamma at the disenchantment of her visions, when she found that Paul was there, not as a delighted lover, but as the noble abdicator of his claims, who led the happy couple up to the mother.

This strange fulfilment of Frau Hiller's long-cherished wish to see Paul again was not quite to her liking; and it was no pleasant thing, now that he actually stood before her eyes, to relinquish him altogether, and see her beautiful Pauline a gardener's wife.

The mother was, however, after a time, quite sensible enough to understand fully that she could not bring the pair together if neither of the two wished it, so she put a good face on a losing game. Papa Hiller rubbed his hands contentedly, sagely remarking, "I have always said it would be better so."

Paul, even to the end of the matter, acted as a generous friend. He ordered a grand betrothal feast, to which Frau Clara, who lived close by, was ready enough to accept the invitation, for herself, her husband the schoolmaster, and her promising little family.

The large sum with which Paul had supplied self for the purpose of conveying his bride in respectable way to her future home, enabled him make a valuable wedding present towards the blishment of the young couple ; and when in a days after he set off on his journey homeds, there were none but contented hearts who e parting from each other. Whether, perhaps, ight, a very slight feeling of regret arose in the rt of the noble assessor, as he looked back his at the sweet rose so newly unfolding her etest bloom in the sunshine of affection, I know

His own wife, in later life, once, but once y, in jest, asked this, but without looking for answer.

The spring, which had brought such wealth to young gardener, had passed away, and it was in the autumn before Paul could reap the red of his generosity. It was the evening before wedding-day, and he was sitting with Matilda the window, their hearts reposing on each other nutual trust, and he could look deep, deep into e expressive eyes, and read there the happiest, est confidence in himself. It was an under- iding without words ; such an entire union of rts as comes to our consciousness in the most ed hours of life only ; such as should ever after preserved in the heart as that high Pisgah-top n whence the promised land can be seen. Aye ! p ever those true deep feelings, keep them

safely, as in some measure an earnest of the everlasting happiness which is reserved for the love of the Christian, even though many dull, every-day scenes and seasons must first be passed through.

"I had not the least idea that your affection for me was so great," said Paul, after a pause.

"Do you think I even knew it sooner myself, or that if I had known it, I should have told you?" said Matilda, with a sweet smile.

Just at this moment, after several apologetic hems, the maid entered, and delivered a handbox addressed to Fraulein Soden.

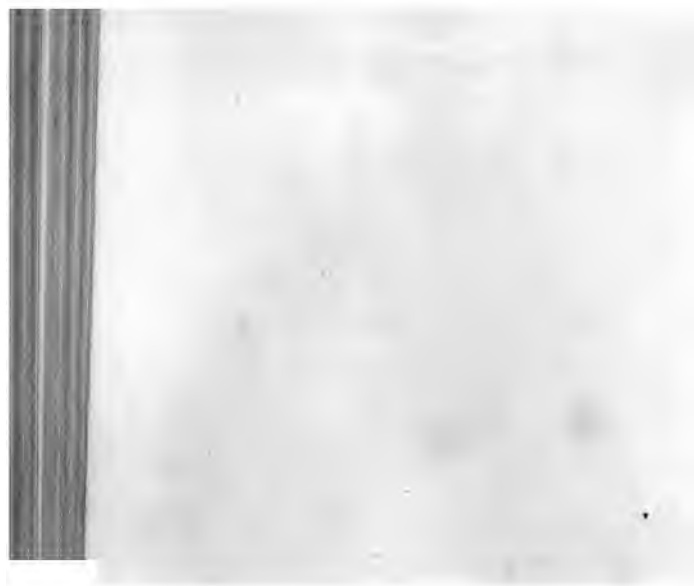
As Matilda opened her box she was greeted by the most delicious fragrance, and with a joyful "Oh!" she took out a glorious abundance of flowers packed in damp moss—a delightful spring in a cloudy autumn: roses, stocks, splendid camellias, with the most beautiful orange-blossoms and sprays of myrtle, in full perfection, lying among them. Paul, smiling, opened the delicate little note which lay upon them, and saw the pretty but stiff characters so well known to him. He read to Matilda the words, which ran thus:—

"RESPECTED LADY BRIDE,

"My husband takes the liberty of sending you a few flowers as a greeting, as we hear that you will so soon be married. We cannot tell you how very happy we are together. Every day we thank our God for His goodness in so directing all for the



PAULINE'S PRESENT.



best. I feel very grateful to Herr Birken who helped us to it all.

"We will pray with all our hearts that God may bless you both with peace and joy, as He has blessed us.

"Yours faithfully,

"PAULINE REICHMANN."

Pauline's prayer has not failed of its fulfilment.

VIII.

Old Jenny.

"And I in my life's evening would
 That I too had, like this good wife,
 Fulfill'd whate'er fulfil I should
 Within my bounds and reach of life;
 Would that I too had so well kenned
 At Life's full cup to quaff my measure,
 And yet, like her, learned at its end
 To don my shroud with no less pleasure."

CHAMISSON.

I MIGHT feel some hesitation in placing this simple sketch amidst what might be called a picture-gallery. It is certainly genuine and faithful, but it has neither poetic nor historic importance. And yet I have sometimes seen in galleries devoted to works of art some modest little picture standing between noble historic paintings and charming and remarkable portraits, which, having a worth of its own, has not failed to enlist the sympathies of some one who passed on his way. It is just as such a tiny side-piece that my Jenny may claim a little space, where it may show how a genial and sunny nature can find a fruitful soil for itself wherever it may come.

Any one of my dear lady readers (for with gentlemen readers I must at once dispense) who

may chance to have made a pilgrimage to Schiller's birth-place,* will be certain to have wandered a few steps beyond the lowly and unadorned dwelling of the poet, through the sturdy row of pillars, now the sole remains of the city gate, and out into a small suburb, where the green trees look forth on all sides from among the houses. The deep ditch which surrounds the town was dug at the time when the place was fortified, and it reached up to the corner gate. The ditch was dried up long ago, grown over and over with fine high grass, and has become a Paradise for the children, who here find the most glorious playground for their gambols ; in spring sweet violets and primroses in plenty, and in winter a place for their slides.

At the entrance towards this ditch, there stood, till within these few years, a little house, a very little one ! As soon as you opened the house-door you stepped into what was both hall and kitchen in one, and you stood at the same time immediately before the door of the low and only room which the tiny house contained. But the room had a window on each of the three sides, that in front looking into the street, and those on the other sides into the green, and the sun could shine through and through the room, so that it was a very pleasant parlour, especially when Jemmy and Jenny occupied it together. In this little gate-house Schiller's grandfather by the

* *Marbach*, in *Württemberg*.

mother's side had formerly dwelt, at a time when his circumstances were much reduced. Old neighbours still relate how the grandson, when he came from Ludwiesburg to visit his grandfather, climbed in at the back window because he was ashamed to be seen entering the little lowly dwelling. But I think they are unjust to the good Schiller, and that it was from some remains of pure boyish fun that he preferred clambering through the window to going in by the regular way.

Be this as it may, however, Jenny was, in and for herself, important enough to make her house interesting to and valued by her friends, and friends she had, almost as many as the town numbered of inhabitants. Frau Jenny, as she was called, for her family name was forgotten, was, to express myself as politely as possible, the *accoucheuse* and monthly nurse of the little town, not the only one, but certainly the highest of her calling. She used to boast with great self-complacency that she had studied under the old doctor; and seeing that the old doctor, who had long since been called home, had been for many years much beloved and valued throughout the neighbourhood as a medical man, the reflection of his fame rested on Jenny, so that she was regarded as an oracle in her way, and was a person of consequence in most houses whether great or small, for in Schiller's native town there are neither palaces nor huts.

Jenny did not misuse her very influential position: she neither carried tittle-tattle backwards

and forwards, nor did she endeavour to irritate wives against their husbands. But she had a kindly as well as a ready tongue, and knew very well how to speak her mind so thoroughly and properly whenever a parsimonious or thoughtless husband neglected the comforts of his wife in a time of need that the gentleman could make no mistake about her meaning, and never again to the end of his days would venture to grumble at the necessary expenses. She knew all the townspeople, and bluntly addressed the worthy citizens as well as their wives with the familiar "thee" and "thou," and nobody ever thought of being offended with any word of Jenny's. All through their lives she regarded the children whom she had taken in charge at their entrance into the world as in some sort her own especial property, and she positively declared that there existed a peculiar feeling between herself and them. She could discern them if ever so far off. "That's one of mine, too," she would say, with a significant nod, as a tall, dashing student passed by. "He needn't be so proud, for he was such a poor, wretched mite of a babby that you might have stuffed him into his father's slippers." And with what feelings of peculiar exultation did she stand in the church when a maiden was led to the altar, and when the bride's mother, while looking on triumphantly, whispered, "One of yours, isn't she?"

Jenny was very affectionate, and had an especial love for children, knowing at the same time how

to make them all, little or great, respect and love her. She would carry about remnants of christening-cake in her pocket, wherewith to entice the little folks. At Easter time her tiny garden was set out with coloured eggs and buns, which she gave away most liberally ; and her little room, small as it was, held curiosities enough for children's eyes and children's hearts. The low window was surrounded by yellow aconites and adorned with carnations and wallflowers. On the top of the tester bedstead lay a large old edition of Arndt's "True Christianity," with its remarkable allegorical pictures ; and all the walls were hung round with bird-cages full of merry birds of every note and song. But the choicest rarity there was a colossal Black Forest clock, the pendulum of which was swung by a little pasteboard man, with red jacket and pointed nose, a masterpiece of Jemmy's, and an object of great admiration to the children. The said Jemmy was Jenny's husband ; and if she may not be considered absolutely as a fixed star, yet Jemmy was surely a planet, deriving his light from her. Even the outward appearance of the two would direct the mind to the fact that he took the second part in the domestic duet, and must be content to be the husband of his wife. Jenny, to her latest day, was ever a slender, stately figure, never losing her upright carriage. Jemmy was humpbacked, bent almost like a wheel, and wore his hair in the old fashion, brushed back, and firmly fastened with a large comb. His intelligent face



was always cheerful, and his heart was still looking towards Heaven, though his face could not. He was an industrious man, and would occupy himself with something or other even in his hours of leisure ; and while he was as kindly disposed towards children as his wife, he was much more tolerant of their misdoings. If Jenny ruled at home she ruled with dignity and in peace, and the wedded pair lived together in diligence and harmony. When Jenny was called away in the night, Jemmy would get ready the hot soup against her return, and altogether took upon himself most of the cares and troubles of housekeeping ; for Jenny, having so much to do out of the house, was glad of rest at home. Jemmy had the office of gate-keeper, and had to take the toll, and Jenny would rush out like a lioness if any rude peasant strove to pass by the little man without paying.

Our good couple were not themselves blessed with children ; but they found compensation in the affection of little Jim, the adopted child of a poor sister. No child was ever more tenderly loved, or more carefully attended to by his own parents, than was little Jim. Jenny's eyes glistened when she only spoke of him, and she would often declare that he was "mortal clever," and wrote such a fine hand, adding that when he was only in his eighth year he had written on a board, "The bear growls." Jemmy was a good lad, responding tenderly to the love of his foster-parents ; but before he grew up and was able to support them,

and spirit, in voluntary servitude. The joys and woes of the little circle, the marriages and mournings, she felt as her own ; but the highest prized of the children was William, whose life she believed she had once, by the blessing of God, been the means of rescuing from the jaws of death, and Willie was, to her thinking, the most perfect of all the children of men—the abstract of all beauty and loveliness.

At one time an artist who made portraits in crayons, appeared unexpectedly in our little town, where he soon obtained the name of the peep-hole artist, because he fixed his eyes on the persons he drew through the small round aperture, at which all the population presented themselves for their pictures. He certainly made great mistakes in all their faces. One of his greatest misdoings was the portrait of William, who though in truth a fine, intelligent-looking boy, appeared in his picture like a pug dog looking forth from a striped waistcoat. The peep-hole artist was, like the ratcatcher of Hameln, gifted with one special magic faculty. He had, on his first arrival, painted the High Bailiff in the most becoming state uniform, and exhibited the likeness. "How well he has hit him off!" cried everyone admiringly. "Quite a speaking likeness;" and from that moment the town-clerk and his lady, the whole family of the doctor, in short, all the people of position and the respectable citizens of the little town, went to have their *portraits* taken, each succeeding one being declared to

be better than the last. As to the children, he rang the changes between blue and red clothes, between tulips or roses which they held in their hands, and between two or three-cornered heads. All were thought pretty as each was looked at, and the price of each portrait was half a guinea, except that of the beautiful wife of the clergyman, for which fifteen shillings was charged, on account, the artist said, of her lovely countenance. However, the portrait painter had no sooner taken himself from the town with his rich booty, than people's eyes were suddenly opened. Everyone lamented over his wasted half-guinea, and the works of art were banished to the lumber-room.

Even the halo which had been cast around William's portrait vanished to all but Jenny, who looked at it with the transfiguring eyes of love. She was quite overjoyed when the doctor's wife made her a present of it. It was the chief ornament of her little room, and was hung opposite her bed, so that she was able to gaze at her William from morning till evening. Jenny's little room was indeed a second home for the living William, and he and his brothers and playfellows spent many happy hours seated on little stools around the well-scoured table, while Jemmy told them stories of what had happened during the French occupation of Germany, in all of which he had been concerned, though not as a soldier, yet as a looker-on. Jenny entertained them with nuts, boiled eggs, and home-made wine from the grapes in a vineyard which

was the pride of her heart, and which she had purchased with the savings of the wedded pair. The apple and plum-trees were freely given up to their young friends, and these trees seemed to confirm the popular belief that a tree which refreshes the traveller bears double, for they were almost every year laden with fruit, even when others stood bare.

William did not in later days forget this pleasant home of his childhood. Every time he came back to see his parents he went off to visit Jenny before any other friend ; while she always kept her nicest fruit and largest grapes ready for his coming. When at length he became the assistant of a reverend pastor, Jenny one day thrust a bag of nuts into the carriage of a gentleman stranger who was passing through the village, and requested that he would leave them at the door of her William. And when her friend and patron of many years, the doctor, died, she was compelled to transfer her affections from the children to the grandchildren, which she and Jemmy most faithfully did, dividing hereafter her favours between the house of her old benefactor and that of the assistant minister. As it was her duty to give the notices of baptism to the clergyman, she was well-acquainted with the reverend pastor, and found a wide sphere for the exercise of her calling in the blessed house of the younger minister, from whose windows the children's white clothes were continually waving like white flags of truce. And

here too she was ever welcome, whether health or sickness was in the dwelling. She seemed like the good genius of the parents of the poor, for at her representation of their need the benevolent pastor would forego all christening fees.

Jenny was also one of the curate's most attentive auditors, and many a time made him acquainted with the opinion of the congregation on his preaching. She had so remarkable a memory for his sermons that when the clergyman had on one occasion, through press of ministerial duties, been induced to make partial use of a sermon which he had delivered some years previously, Jenny said to him, with her sly smile, "I think I remember your once giving us that discourse before." She was his most active champion among the congregation, and explained to the people all sorts of misunderstandings. "Of course I must know," she would say; "I and the reverend curate are like David and Jonathan; with us it has been one continued friendship from the first day of his life."

Jenny's little room was a perfect picture of neatness, and when a young relative, a painter who had just come from his travels, gratuitously painted the old dame's room with a garland of asters and daisies, she seemed indeed like a queen in a little town where the habits of life were so simple that there were scarcely three houses in it with papered walls; and Jemmy felt perfectly bewildered in his own house by the number of people who came to see it.



A friend of the happy Jenny ever was ; and though she willingly received gifts, yet she was, after all, the chief giver. The brightest day of her life was that of the grand autumnal feast which she gave every year in the little vineyard cultivated by Jemmy, and improved by his unwearied diligence. All their friends, all the *élite* of the town, together with children and occasional visitors, were invited to Jenny's picnic. Jenny provided tables and benches for the graver folk, with grapes in rich abundance ; while the guests brought bread and wine, sausages, cheese, and ham enough to store her larder for a long while to come. The young ones helped to gather the grapes, and then they would lie down afterwards on the green bank, or play in the clover-field that bordered the vineyard ; nowhere did they feel happier or freer from restraint, could nowhere better give the rein to all pure, bright, youthful pleasures than at Jenny's feast. Each one brought his contribution to the fireworks. Jenny looked with peculiar enthusiasm after every serpent and rocket, for all ascended from her own vineyard. On this glorious day she felt elevated to the king-like power of giving and making happy, and she went hither and thither with beaming face, encouraging the merriment and pledging each in the good wine which had been brought to the festival. Jenny, strengthened by many years' practice, could carry a little glass of wine well, becoming indeed, as it took effect, somewhat merry and jocose, but she held herself erect, and ever kept her head clear

when "White," "Red," and "Schiller" had been duly honoured. But Jemmy was not so strong, and yet could not wholly withstand the temptation of drinking one or two of the many glasses which were pressed upon him. On one occasion the feast had a tragical result for him, and he had to be driven home in a carriage; but this unpleasant jest of her visitors, Jenny, spite of her usual good-humour, received most ungraciously; and when the long streaming procession went off with torches and amid the voice of song from her vineyard to their homes, even the thundering cheers which were given her and Jemmy could by no means reconcile her to this vexation. And yet every autumn she duly prepared again for the feast, only earnestly requesting the gentlemen to keep their promise faithfully, that "this time they would not give Jemmy too much."

Jenny and Jemmy were permitted for a long season to walk life's path together before she was called to close the eyes of her faithful partner. Jenny had always been so self-reliant, so independent of Jemmy, that people said she would not miss him much. But the separation touched her to the quick; she aged all at once, and never again had quite her old cheerful way after he was gone.

The old town wall had at length fallen in, and the space had been occupied by new houses. Even the little gate-house had through length of time gone to ruin, and was to have been pulled down, but it had been suffered to remain for Jemmy's

sake. After his death, however, the town-council resolved that Jenny, too, should live there undisturbed, and that the little house should not be taken down till she had died.

Though Jenny became in advancing years unable to exercise her calling as usual, yet, in order that she might not distress herself on this account, she was always called in, in company with an abler assistant, to all her own ladies. She lived alone in her little house; her only company was her small library, which consisted entirely of religious books, each volume being also a memorial of some specially important and satisfactory engagement.

"That 'Brasberger,'" she would say, "I bought with the crown thaler that the Chief Justice gave me at the birth of his little one; Skriver's 'Soul's Treasure' came from my little Willie here; the 'Oetinger' from the Burgermaster's Louisa," &c. &c.

It seemed a peaceful picture when, on a quiet Sunday afternoon, the passer-by could peep through the little low window, and see the old woman with snow-white hair, sitting there so devout, and quite absorbed by her book. In small towns people are not so easily forsaken and forgotten, even when they have passed from the business of the scene, as they are in larger places; and Jenny, as she became weaker and more infirm, was affectionately and liberally cared for. Above all, the beloved son of the respected household looked after her with much devotion and self-sacrifice. Her aged



face brightened with joy whenever he came to see her in her last sickness. "You must promise me," she said, "to come to me when the end draws near;" and he promised to do so, though he believed that the period was yet far off, for, though bed-ridden, she had still in other respects her ordinary powers.

William was absent at a family festival one day, when all at once an inexplicable anxiety and uneasiness came over him, and he set off home at an earlier hour than he had intended. When he arrived the first tidings that met him were that Jenny had departed in peace. She was ready for her departure—she had not read her Bible, her Arndt and Hofacker, in vain; and she had done as people in country places so generally do—she had carefully laid by, many years before, a fine long linen dress and sheet ready for burial.

Jenny had grown very old. She was laid in the grave with all honour; and it would have rejoiced her heart could she have known how stately a procession would follow her to the churchyard, where she, with her husband and foster-son, await a joyful resurrection. The little gate-house is broken down, but Jenny's vineyard was purchased by the aristocracy of the little town; and there, every year, an autumnal feast is kept to her memory, and a loud huzza in honour of Jemmy and Jenny resounds a thousand times from the green hills till it echoes back to the spot where the little gate-house stood.

IX.

Engenie.

"Oh, little room! I used to lie
 And watch, on nights like these,
 The great red-visaged moon climb high
 Above the ancient trees;
 Climb high in the purple heaven, and pour
 Broad floods of light below,
 Paler and paler, pure and clear,
 Till the lawns and grassy levels near
 Lay white as fields of snow."

A WOOD ADVENTURE.

AMIDST the seclusion of thick green woods stands the old convent of Altenhausen. It is an unadorned building, surrounded by high walls, and having beside it a fine antique church, in the form of a cross. To speak familiarly, however, one may say that the convent now only plays at hide and seek, and there is no risk of entire loneliness, for after a few windings its path leads out into the open country, and ends in a fine, good high road, where the solemn peace of the convent is lost in the prosaic rattle of waggons and the loud clatter of the diligence.

The pious friars have long since passed away—
 died out. "Loneliness is no longer the fashion

there," I once heard a young lady say, when a friend wished to allure her from the hot, dusty ball-room of a watering-place to a walk in the wood. The old passages and cells of the ancient convent are turned into granaries, and the venerable building on the mountain, where in old times the warden of the convent had his home, now serves as a dwelling for the chief forester, for the woods about Altenhausen were a productive hunting-ground before the year 1848, when the poachers, unchecked by law, exterminated the deer.

There was one heart, however, on the day of my narrative, which was wishing itself transported back to the old times; one eye which was now roving with delight over the deep varied green of the mountains that shut in the convent, and was gazing up to the old castle ruin that, surrounded by a few fir-trees, looked forth in solemn grandeur through the fresh green foliage of the lordly oaks. That young maiden there, sitting up in the large window of the corner room of the old convent, cared nothing at all about the important facts that just below there lay a convenient *chaussée*, and that the fine town of Dippelsburg, the seat of a government officer, stood but a few miles distant. No, as she sat there, she much preferred fancying herself a damsel in a castle, or perhaps a nun with her life ebbing slowly to its close, or a heart-broken maiden who glanced up at the castle where once had dwelt all she had loved and lost. She delighted in dreaming how perchance the knight

had formerly looked over from the battlements and watched the maiden's lonely taper burning in the distance, night by night, till at length he heard the tolling of the little funeral bell of the convent church, and entered within its sacred walls. There, by the altar, stood the open coffin within which she lay, snow white, among the flowers, all fair and lovely as she had been in life, though she had been for ten years fading away in the loneliness of the convent. And then she would picture to herself the knight standing by the coffin, with his tears falling upon it, and she hardly knew how to decide whether he ought forthwith to breathe out his soul beside the corpse of his beloved one, or whether he should only cut off a lock of her fair hair—though the nuns of those times wore no curls, and a sorrowing knight, one might suppose, did not walk the world with a pair of scissors in his pocket ready for such purposes. And then she would dream that the knight finally rushed forth to conflict and death.

Before she had had time to decide which plan would be better suited to the romance, a rather loud voice called out from below—

“Where are you, Eugenie? They are just going to open the chest where the things likely to break were packed among the down beds and pillows; go at once and see about them yourself.”

Ah! that was the voice of mamma, who was worrying herself downstairs about all sorts of things, and Eugenie at once—no longer the die-

away nun, but the little active daughter of the newly-appointed chief forester—ran quickly downstairs and set herself busily and heartily to work in ascertaining that all the girlish treasures had happily escaped damage during the long and dangerous journey from Elsigheim to Altenhausen.

The worry of the removal and the first arrangements of the newly-arrived family were over. The chief forester's wife had, amid much sighing, set out in the ancient room, with its quaint stucco-work and panelling, all her elegant red plush furniture, and her what-not, with its splendid china cups, and had laid down her carpet, which was gay with roses as large as a child's head.

"Things do not show at all to advantage here," she said; "they seem all lost in this dim, dull room; and when I think of our beautiful house at Elsigheim, and the drawing-room with the light blue drapery—but then, to be sure, it does not matter here, where there are none but foxes and hares to say good night to each other, and where nobody of any consequence will ever see it."

"Be comforted, mamma," said the chief forester, in a consolatory tone; "the income I have here will allow me to keep a horse for you, and a nice little carriage, and you can ride or drive and pay visits in the neighbourhood, and receive visits to your heart's content; so that, after all, there will be people to be overwhelmed with astonishment at the grandeur of your establishment. Look now, there sits little Eugenie, as happy as a queen, and

quite satisfied with our solitude ; and yet I fancy she is a little younger than you are."

" Ah ! young people are like butterflies," said mamma, half- vexed ; " they are sufficiently happy in their own selves ; but it may be different by-and-by."

Eugenie, meantime, had all her treasures carried into the upper corner room. Her elegantly-painted little table stood by the window-seat ; the handsome book-case, which would have been faultless save for its trick of easily sliding on one side ; her favourite pictures, the bracket loaded with all kinds of useless trifles, the flower-stands, and the large pot of ivy which, with other plants, had borne the long journey wonderfully well, all packed in a homely wooden bathing-tub, were now all around her. Here the young lady arranged her own little world. The gallant assistant of papa, Herr Von Plümer, who, during the commotion of the removal was continually standing in somebody's way, offered his services to the young lady, but he was refused admission into this sanctuary. It was, however, certainly something for him to offer to do any favour needing activity, for Herr Von Plümer was a good-looking young man, who expressed his homage rather by graceful attitudes and fascinating manners than by words or deeds.

Eugenie had soon completed all the arrangements of her room, and felt perfectly happy in the new home ; for she could sit undisturbed at her window, looking out and indulging all her romantic

reams as much as she pleased. The far-off blue mountains rose up above the green wooded hills, and she pictured to herself enticing green paths amid their shadow, where surely some wonderful thing or other must happen now and then. But above all, that grey, ruined, time-stained castle attracted her yearning gaze. Her chief desire was to go alone on a journey of discovery to that stile. Walking with others was not at all to her taste, unless her society was very select. She wandered, however, the next evening, with her father and mother, up the pretty and well-made road which the chief forester had already found it. But to Eugenie the loneliest paths were ever the loveliest. She was of the same opinion as Jean Paul, who always longed to be alone when looking on the face of his ever-beloved Nature.

The charms of these evening excursions were in no means heightened to the young lady by the fact that the forester's assistant joined the family party on these occasions, and took pains to look extremely amiable in the presence of Eugenie. The young lady was so well used to receive the homage of her father's assistants in the default of any other object on whom they might bestow it, that she would perhaps have taken it amiss if she had been unnoticed by any one of them. She found it convenient at parties and rural picnics to be able to reckon with certainty on a cavalier who would carry her shawl, or pick up her reel of cotton; but this did not in any way contribute to

her happiness, it left her heart untouched she now accepted, without embarrassment Von Plümer's almost silent admiration, same way that she had done that of former who had gone off with hearts unbroken, sorely distressed, and whose departure she witnessed with the most perfect composure was not her fault if any of them did not find that he was not her ideal.

Eugenie's heart rejoiced in all the sweet influences of this lovely scene, and delicious freedom with which, especially in the morning, she might venture forth out of the house. Thanks to an energetic mother, Eugenie knew the magic charms of the hours of morning, the precious breath of early dawn, while the clouds of Heaven yet lie scattered like pearls on the sky. In former days, when she had lived in a town, she had been obliged to limit her morning walk to the little garden of a neighbour; but here she could make glorious discoveries. She in the next day, though very cautiously and with a guide, which was the way to the ruins. "I should recommend you to go there alone, Frau Eugenie," said Herr Von Plümer; "thither, along the high road towards Dippelshausen is long and tedious, and the path through the woods is difficult to find out; but if I might of my escort——"

"Thanks, thanks," replied Eugenie, c

we can wait till some time when we have any here."

"I assure you you will really see very little of the ruins," said the young man; "the ruins look all the better for their distance. There is a bit of crumbling wall, a vault filled with hay, a tolerably good corner tower without a roof; that is all. I am told that every summer the people of Dippelsburg make a large party to the ruins, when the landlord of a neighbouring alehouse takes refreshments up to them."

"That is intolerable," said Eugenie, warmly, "they should spoil and desecrate with beer-drinking the sweet, quiet places where Nature of the Past have still some sanctuary."

"But I must tell you," said Herr Von Plümer, "eternally, 'one does get thirsty even in the most solitudes after having climbed up a mountain for two hours.'"

"Of course; a glass of beer and a good slice of bread are quite as good amid woodland shades as anywhere else," added the chief forester.

"Nonsense, indeed!" exclaimed Eugenie, with colour, and with heightened colour, to the great amusement and delight of her father, who, to console her for his offence, began talking of the new carriage which he was about to buy, in which she and her mamma could drive all over the country. "The day after to-morrow," he continued, "I shall make my first visit to

Dippelsburg ; on that occasion, indeed, we must make shift with an old hunting-chaise which will only accommodate your mamma and me ; but we shall be visiting some houses where there are young ladies, and you and your mamma can go and see them another day."

While mamma was intent on arranging in her own mind what toilette would be best adapted to these visits, and whether she should wear her shawl or her new mantle, Eugenie was secretly making some little plans of her own. She was in no hurry to pay formal morning-calls at Dippelsburg, though there were times when she could take a very animated part at parties and excursions, even when at the latter—oh ! horror—cheese was eaten.

But Eugenie was longing now above everything for a journey of discovery to the ruins, and she feared, spite of the indulgence of her parents, that they might not give their permission for her to go thither.

A peculiar and deeply-rooted idea exists in country-folk who ride into towns to make calls, that they cannot find people at home unless they set out very early, and find them, if not in their beds, or at their washing-stands, at least sitting down to breakfast. Accordingly, the chief forester's wife arose early, notwithstanding that she had lain awake till midnight thinking over all that was to be done at this first drive to Dippelsburg—this one day's trip—though the whole of her wardrobe, even to her pocket-handkerchief, was laid

ready over night, and the early breakfast duly planned. She had even given herself an extra amount of preparatory washing, as if she were not a lady who was always well washed. Three times during the night she struck the hour by her husband's large gold repeater; and at early dawn she and her husband set off, leaving many words of condolence to Eugenie for being left behind.

The chief forester had, on the day previous, sent his assistant to a distant hunting-ground on a commission which would require his absence for some days, as mamma did not think it proper that he should be left quite alone with her daughter. Eugenie looked calmly after her parents as they drove away, and then hurried up to her bedroom, bathed her still sleepy eyes in cold water, and flew downstairs, merry as a bird, in her simple morning-dress and summer hat, and her parasol in hand.

In spite of the young maiden's contempt for bodily nourishment taken in the midst of the glories and beauties of Nature, yet she carried with her in her little basket some dried fruit and a few rolls, taking also a volume of "Eichendorf's Tales," as she could not tell how long the journey might prove. Christine ruled supreme in the regions below. She was an old household servant, who, notwithstanding that she harboured a great disinclination to the loneliness of houses all among woods, had nevertheless come hither with the family, declaring every day, however, that she could never stay here much longer, shut up from

everybody, though one really might have imagined that even in the society of the humblest peasantry she could have found intercourse quite suited to the level of her education.

Christine had determined that she would celebrate the absence of her master and mistress by having a glorious house-cleaning. She had already set open the doors and windows of the dining and drawing-rooms, and begun to disarrange all the furniture, and she now was ordering about with wondrous dignity the village girls who had so recently entered service there. "Christine," said Eugenie, "I am going for a little walk ; perhaps I shall not be back till late, but you need not be uneasy about me."

"Ain't going to," grumbled out Christine; "one's used to it. All that I shall trouble myself about is those wet clothes from the wash."

With what light and joyous footsteps did Eugenie bound away over the meadows and hasten forward to the green woodland, which was yet dim in the grey morning light ! Amid the sweet spell of silence and solitude, young maiden dreams—sweet, bright, and shapeless as dissolving views—passed before her. She had no clearly-defined wishes ; she would scarcely have known what to wish for, for all her young life had been so serene and free from care, there was no sorrow in her heart—at least none that might not have been as easily dispelled as is a summer cloud by a passing breeze. And by-and-by, deeper, graver, and holier

oughts came upon her as she stepped in beneath the lofty trees, which have been not inaptly called "The church built by God's own hands."

It is easy enough for the young to have just about so much religion as is implied in this. Feelings of gladness mingle more readily with thoughts of God than some rigid and grave natures could imagine; but just on this account is youth so often satisfied with this merely natural religion, and contented with its own heart and life. The rapt gaze which it sends into the promised land it willingly believes to be the possession of the land itself; and it forgets the teachings of scripture, and the solemnity of the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy strength." It offers willingly and cheerfully to the great God all that which asks no self-denial, no consciousness of its own worthlessness and evil, but that only which it can give without effort and without any deep humbleness of heart.

As Eugenie entered the wood she met a wood-utter, but as she had no chief forester-like conscience, it never concerned her to know whether he came there for the purpose of stealing the wood or injuring the trees. He was a welcome sight to her, because he could answer her questions about the way to the tower, as the people in that neighbourhood called the ruin; and when he gave her the needed information she walked briskly on, and climbed higher and higher, till she got into a

depth of woodland shadow such as she had never before been in alone. At length she pushed her way through some thick bushes, and stood on a small open space close before the ruin.

Nothing now remained of the castle itself, save a crumbling wall, with some old broken window-arches, and the vaults below ; but the walls of the square tower stood yet firm and unbroken. Eugenie was, so far as is consistent with a true womanly nature, a very fearless being, and was, though often blamed by her mother, much admired by her friends for her courage and intrepidity. She was only too ready to venture on dangerous crags, and narrow ledges of mountains or sea cliffs ; and would with the greatest temerity and presumption be rocked about in a small boat on deep water. She would walk much more closely than was necessary beside horses and carriages, and would push away the heads of yoked oxen in the most courageous manner in order to pass them if they were in her way. Strange ! here quite alone, in front of these massy stones an indescribable terror seized her, strengthened by the sight of a slow-worm which glided from out the castle wall. She felt ashamed of her own cowardice, and when she turned suddenly round she again felt dismayed even at the dark, lonely wood which lay behind, and it seemed to her as she hastily turned to hurry back, as if some horrible thing would follow her out of the castle vault. She stood for a moment like one isolated from all the world—not a soul far or near. The battlements of

the tower looked bright in the morning sunlight. "Ah, if I were only up there!" said Eugenie to herself, "I could see far out into the country; then all these horrors would fade away in the full daylight, and I should regain my courage." But there was no staircase, nothing but bare walls and a high ladder leaning against them.

Moving quickly that she might not again encounter the slow-worm, Eugenie climbed the ladder. It did not quite reach the top, but was near enough for her to swing herself on to the broad wall, which being bordered by a low parapet offered a secure place for walking. Eugenie could breathe more freely up here, and yet she, who never before had known any dizziness, felt as if she could not venture to look straight down the outer wall of the tower. There was nothing remarkable in the distant prospect, where, through the wide-spread wooded hills, one could occasionally get a peep at the deep blue distant mountains, or see some of the steeples of Dippelsburg, and here and there a piece of the high road; but the rest was wood, always wood, green, beautiful woodland.

Eugenie stood, drawing in full draughts of the pure morning air. She smiled even while at this height at all her former horrors, and looked down at the wall of the haunted castle. But the sun gradually grew hotter, and she turned to descend, feeling that she could now bravely venture on her way home. But when she attempted to put her foot on the ladder, she found that the distance

between its upper step and the tower wall was too great for her to reach. There was nothing by which she could hold, and she felt certain that at the first trial she would lose her footing and fall. Again and again she made an effort, but each time she saw more and more plainly the impossibility of stepping on the ladder. She knew she could not do it.

And there Eugenie stood alone on the top of the tower, with no living being near, no trace of a human dwelling; and days, or even weeks, might pass before anyone came near the place. She called aloud again and again, but there came no answer. All her heroism had passed away, and she was now only a weak, distressed girl. No one at home knew whither she had gone; her parents would not be back till night. The assistant forester was away, and indeed she thought to herself that she should not like to have been found up there by him; she did not know in what light he would have regarded her peculiar position there.

It seemed to Eugenie, after a while, as if an age had passed since she had been banished to this height; and the hot sun soon made her head ache. A terrible story which she had once read came into her mind. It was of an English lady who ascended a pyramid, and Eugenie could not remember how it all happened, but by some means or other she had been forgotten, could never get down, and was starved to death.

She too had left even her little basket of provi-

below on the stone bench in front of the
 2. Her eye roved disconsolately and wearily
 the solitary woodlands;—but there! did she de-
 herself, or did she really hear a noise? No, she
 inly heard some sound, but it might be a deer
 bird; or a fawn rushing through the broken
 ches. It was certainly no knight in polished
 ur whom she saw coming, neither was it a
 forest ranger or woodcutter, but a slender
 g man in a summer travelling dress, who was
 oing up an almost inaccessible path, directly
 site to the one by which she had come.

er renewed cry for help was less vigorous, and
 ed away in maiden bashfulness as she recalled
 trange position in which she felt herself to be.
 youth below, however, had already seen with
 ishment the delicate form of the young girl
 ere in her light dress and floating veil.

Are you all alone, beautiful wood-nymph?" he
 d out, excited by the extraordinary spectacle;
 then working his way through the bushes he
 stood on the grass-plot below.

ugenie at once lost all her romantic elevation
 aracter, and was ready to burst into tears;
 he look of the stranger inspired her with con-
 ce, and he seemed to her as if sent from
 ven.

"I have climbed up too far here," she said, much
 sed, and doing her best not to cry. "I shall
 r get down again."

As the young man came round from the other side

of the ruin, and beheld the slight difficulty, which was however insurmountable to the young maiden.

Without much loss of time in thinking about it, he climbed the ladder, which fortunately was strong and firm, and caught Eugenie, who had become helpless through terror and anguish, in his strong arms. The damsels of romance rescued from difficulties are said to be as light as feathers, but our young knight did not in this case find it so. Eugenie, though slight and flexible, was yet strong and healthy ; and it needed no small effort on the part of the young man, who half carried, half guided her, to bring his burden safe to the ground. The test of that celebrated knight who was required to carry his beloved up the castle stairs would have been far less difficult to accomplish than was this feat.

And now the rescuer and the rescued sat down on the stone bench. All Eugenie's usually frank bearing, all her girlish spirits, had departed. She had been exhausted by her prolonged distress, subdued by the singular position, with an entire stranger, in which her thoughtlessness had placed her ; she felt like a weak child, and had all the time to struggle against her tears. The quiet, respectful, and really chivalrous behaviour of her deliverer by degrees restored her to composure. He did his best to calm her, and with that sure instinct of a woman's heart, she felt safe beside him, spite of the peculiarity of the occurrence.

Eugenie had after a time so far recovered herself

that she could relate to the stranger how, for the first time, she had taken her early walk hither from Altenhausen, and she described how a strange terror came upon her spirit when up on the ruined tower, so that she never could have had resolution to come down.

“It is not the first time,” she said, suddenly recollecting herself, “that this sort of thing has happened to me. I remember that two years ago I was so venturesome as to run along a narrow plank which a workman had laid over a rapid stream, and then I durst not go back, till at length a friend who was with me fetched a ferryman, who rowed me over.”

“I think it is a hazardous thing to let you walk out alone, young lady,” said the stranger, smiling.

“Oh, you must naturally think me foolish and imprudent, I know,” said Eugenie, colouring deeply.

“I think, if I were your father or brother,” said the young man, “I should certainly oppose these lonely and somewhat dangerous rambles.”

Eugenie blushed still more deeply, and again she felt ready to burst into tears, for this sounded so like blame—indeed, almost like a reproof. She could not help thinking how much more gallantly Herr Von Plümer would have expressed himself on the matter; and yet it seemed singular, but the stranger lost nothing in her eyes by this frankness. Indeed, it inspired her with a confidence in him which was really valuable in the situation in which

this strange rencontre had placed her. Her eyes were cast down, or she would otherwise have seen that the gaze with which the young man regarded her young excited countenance was, though frank and cheerful, neither reproachful nor fatherly.

"But I must be going home," said Eugenie, timidly, rising at the same time from her seat; "it must be terribly late."

"It is almost nine o'clock," said the stranger, smiling, as he looked at his watch.

It did not escape the feminine glance of Eugenie, who even amidst her agitation felt a desire to know something of the position in life of her deliverer, that the watch was a valuable one, and attached to a handsome gold chain.

"Is it possible," said she, much relieved, "that it is only nine? I thought it must be long after noonday."

And smoothing her hair, and tying on her hat, she took up her little basket with its contents untouched, for spite of her exhaustion she found it impossible to eat.

"Allow me, Fraulein, to accompany you till you are quite sure of the way," said the stranger, very respectfully.

Eugenie felt that she had lost her courage and spirit of enterprise, and gladly accepted the companionship and indeed the arm of the young man, although her manner betrayed some shyness. She had already said that she came from Altenhausen, but she had not mentioned her name, neither did

she know that of the stranger. They talked but little, but still the kind and pleasant voice of the young man sounded quite like music to her ears when he endeavoured to take off her attention from the late events by stories of his travels, and his description of the woods and forests of foreign lands. Although he had never before been through these paths, yet he found out the road as if by instinct, carrying in his hand as they went along the half-faded posy of wood-flowers which Eugenie had gathered while clambering up, and which she had laid down on the bench and forgotten.

At length they reached a clearing in the wood where the road lay open all the way to the old nunnery.

"And now," said Eugenie, rather confused, and withdrawing her arm, "I must thank you most heartily ; you have taken a great deal of trouble on my account."

The stranger had plucked a little nosegay in which some pretty branches of evergreen were mingled with the early lilies of the valley and wild hyacinths.

"May I offer you an exchange for your faded flowers?" he said, modestly.

"Thank you, thank you heartily," replied Eugenie.

"Farewell, Fraulein," said the unknown knight ; and Eugenie went her way towards the cloister immediately, almost hurriedly, and without looking back. *Once only*, just as she reached home, she

turned her head. She thought she could see a figure in the dim shadow of the trees at the entrance of the wood, and quickly, as if she had been discovered in doing something wrong, she bounded up the stone steps and went in.

The young lady was very little disturbed by the fluster of the old Christine, and she scarcely even noticed that, with a feeling of resentment towards her for having walked away all the morning, the servant had cooked nothing for her dinner but some bread-soup, a dish which Eugenie very much disliked. She scarcely knew what she was eating, and was only too glad to run up to her little room, where, after changing her dress, she might sit at the little window, and look right over the wood up at the castle, and strive to bring by degrees her excited thoughts into some order.

As Eugenie recalled all the details of her adventure at the tower, they appeared rather in a comic than a tragic light ; and she often laughed, and often blushed deeply, as she reviewed all that had been done and said. In the midst of much confusion and vexation with herself, she was yet conscious of a sweet feeling of pleasure which she could neither account for nor describe. The young man had behaved so beautifully, so bravely, had treated her with so much delicacy and respect, that his manner had done much to help her through the painfulness of her situation. Whoever could he be ? Had she not been unkind in leaving him so quickly ? Ought she not to have told him w

she was, and invited him to visit her parents at some future time? Yet it was delightful to think that he, without knowing her, at once felt confidence in her; and treated her, in spite of her simple morning dress, even as a queen might have wished to be treated if in such a case. Had he really gone back into the wood? Would she ever see him again in this world? Ah! what manifold questions arise in the heart of one who is but nineteen years old!

Eugenie scarcely allowed herself time in the evening to arrange the dining-room and have the supper placed ready for the return of her parents. It was a glorious moonlight night, and she went up again to her room and sat at her window, where the grey tower rising up above the dark wood stood now in all the magic effect of the moonlight. That full moonlight must now be surely on the green turf in front of the very spot on which she had stood. She no longer indulged those old dreams of a knight who once dwelt there, but she dreamed over other strange stories which told of happy meetings again, or of those sorrowful tales in which the heroes and heroines never more saw each other.

And now the rough cracking of Frederic's whip sounded from the courtyard, and she heard Christine's harsh voice saying, "There they come!" Her parents had returned from their excursion much pleased with the events of the day. Her mother had wondrous things to relate: the journey had been very agreeable. They halted first at an hotel, where they had to wait till they could make some

fashionable morning calls, which were rather wearisome certainly, though people were most kind and delightful.

"You are invited everywhere," said her mother, with much satisfaction. "The high bailiff has a sweet daughter, and the family will shortly return our call, and take you back with them to a large evening party. There were so many things to relate that Eugenie could have found no means of introducing the narrative of her adventures, and it was a relief to her to keep silent.

The chief forester, who when once drawn out was a man of a genial and social temper, had also been so fortunate as to meet with the "most pleasant people," who had entertained him very much, and he soon joined in the praises which his wife was bestowing on an especially courteous young man whom they met accidentally at the post-house.

"He was really a very nice young man," said mamma, who had sailed happily through the report of all her visits, and had again returned to the inn.

"Yes, yes, you are right," assented papa; "a very well-educated, discreet youth. He must have been some famous traveller; he was a man of most agreeable manners. I must find out who he is. I heard him asking for his coachman."

"It is a very rare thing," said mamma, impressively, "for people nowadays to travel in their own carriage. I took him at first for a forester, as he wore an oak-sprig in his hat."

"Oh, I knew from the first word I heard him

“speak that he was no forester,” said papa; “and besides, I heard him telling the maid to take care of some wild flowers in his room. Wood flowers are not often much valued by a forester; but I fancy there was something of a military air about him.”

“Very likely,” said mamma, “he was some person of importance travelling incognito. Now, if you had but questioned the landlord a little, he might have known.”

“Oh no,” said papa, “it was not a matter of sufficient importance to me; and what any foreign prince or Russian spy could find to do in Dippelsburg I don’t know; but for my part, my dear, I am tired out, and should like to go off to rest.”

No one objected, for the papa was quite accustomed to leave Eugenie and her mother now and then in the drawing-room, sitting over a little chat, and Eugenie was glad on this evening to remain. The mysterious stranger, though to be sure he had, from first to last, neither done nor said anything mysterious, was a very interesting and important subject to the chief forester’s lady; and she little guessed with what intense interest her young daughter drank in every word of her tolerably long description of the bright brown hair and blue eyes of the young man, even the black silk waistcoat, the gold watch, and handsome gold chain. Yes, it must be her knight. “I thought that I once heard our landlord call him Herr Walter,” added mamma, “but that is just the

kind of name which people adopt as a travelling-name when they wish to travel incognito."

"There is no doubt he is the Crown Prince of Malabar," called out papa, rather impatiently, from the next room, for this gossip prevented his going off to sleep. "His grandfather one fine morning ate up all his brothers and sisters, and then they sent the young man on his travels to be safe out of the way. Only, meantime, do go to bed and sleep over the matter."

Eugenie had no objection to withdraw, though for a long time there seemed no chance of her going to sleep. How remarkable that he should have met her parents, and, stranger as he was, have won their good opinion? But her mother's conjecture about his high rank fell somewhat heavily on her heart, for if he really were so distinguished a person they were not likely ever to see him again.

At length, however, Eugenie laid her head on her pillow, and her day-dreams mingled up strangely with the visions of her sleep. Now she seemed in her dreams to be some noble broken-hearted martyr; now she was in a lonely country-house, the unacknowledged wife of a prince. Again she was at his side wearing a diadem, on a balcony, below which a rejoicing multitude were applauding the free choice of their ruler. Cruel stepmothers and malicious court intrigues entered also into her dreams, and Eugenie could not help smiling when she awaked and could see the ruin and the wood

clear daylight. "And why should he be a prince?" said she to herself as she laughed over the wild vagaries of her dream; and from the depths of her hopeful heart a voice responded, "So much the better if he is not." "Perhaps," she said to herself, "he is, after all, some fugitive, some political exile; how beautiful, then, it might be to share his fate, and to hide myself with him in

"Some low cottage deep within the greenwood,
Where the young fawns are grazing up the hill-side,
While fish are swimming blithely in the lake."

Her mother had no need to lament that her Eugenie led so solitary a life. This solitude had been rendered alive and rich enough to her for some time to come.

A HAPPY DISCOVERY.

The high bailiff's family had returned the visit of the chief forester and his wife, and had brought with them their daughter Caroline, who was really a very pleasing girl. The fascinating courtesy of this young lady had had its influence over Eugenie, and appealing to the half-promise given by her parents that she should return with them to the town, Caroline took the young girl off home with her. A large party was to be made up shortly to visit the castle, and there was to be music and a ball in the evening of the day.

It would seem a very generous and self-denying



act in Caroline to insist on making the fair and blooming Eugenie one of the proposed party, for until now she had herself been incontestably a star of the first magnitude in Dippelsburg. It was not that she was particularly handsome ; she was thin, and perhaps rather too much of a brunette ; but she was graceful, and knew so well how to dress herself to advantage that it never occurred to any one to question whether or not she was beautiful. She was the leader of fashion at Dippelsburg. It was she who arranged masquerades and charades, patronized young ladies just come out, and knew how, without giving offence, to keep down the intrusiveness of the daughters of those whom she regarded as of inferior station. She looked upon Eugenie as a new star, and she considered that she would be far less dangerous if introduced under her chaperonship than if she came into society on her own account.

Eugenie had not the remotest idea of lessening Caroline's influence, and gave up to her without the slightest feeling of envy all the homage of Herr Von Plümer, who had lately been much offended by the cool and totally indifferent manner with which Eugenie treated him. The two girls, spite of considerable dissimilarity, had struck up a very pleasant friendship, as two maidens under the same roof are pretty sure to do. People laugh a good deal at these lightly-formed female friendships, and indeed they have often but a slender foundation ; yet they originate in natural kindness

of heart, and in that happy aptitude of feminine natures to adapt themselves readily and fully to all around them. There is not, in reality, a greater earnestness or depth of feeling in those awkward and somewhat dull intimacies with which men or boys are often linked together. It is common enough to see the daughters of our brothers and sisters, or of our early female friends, intimately attached to each other, and thus keeping up from generation to generation the ties of friendship and family connexion. Those who have been friends from youth, however, truly old and warm friends, can rarely succeed in inducing their sons to contract such friendships. Whether it be from natural uncongeniality or from a secret obstinacy which will not allow them to accept friendships selected for them by others, boys will in such cases hold aloof, and know not how to begin with one another. If they are first introduced during their college life, they choose to walk their own way, and have their special engagements; and the earnest, poetic friendships which existed between our fathers seem to be almost unknown to the young men of the present time.

Mistakes are certainly very often made in these lightly-formed friendships of women, and in the present case Caroline's intimacy was of no very great advantage to Eugenie. Her conversation and thoughts were almost exclusively directed to matters of the toilette, and to the news of Dippelsburg and of the capital, in which she had been

born. She was fond above all things of recounting the attentions which she always received, and of the picnic parties at which she had been requested to preside, or in which she expected on some future day to take the lead.

Eugenie was almost indifferent to these topics of conversation. She had a freshness of feeling which rendered varied and exciting amusements unnecessary to her happiness, and hence she could take a sip unharmed at the cup of pleasure. Nature and poetry, and the taste and longing for all the joys which are natural and simple, and the cheerful performance of her daily domestic duties, had occupied her life, and never till now had she felt any interest in dress and fashionable gossip. But when Caroline talked of her own conquests, then Eugenie called to mind the long-forgotten homage paid to her by some of the assistants of her father, and various flattering expressions which had been at one time or other addressed to her, and which may be interpreted pretty much as one chooses, for then she felt a desire to have something to communicate. But the young girl was utterly silent on the subject of her adventure in the woods. Caroline was not nearly intimate enough with her to be told that.

Eugenie, however, had a great desire to hear something farther of the interesting stranger in the wood. She would have liked to know if he had remained all night at the inn, and she imagined that he was so interesting and remarkable

a person that everyone in Dippelsburg must have something to say about him. At first she touched the subject delicately, by asking if many strangers travelled that way.

"Not many, as far as I know," said Caroline; "for in general so few events happen here, that though the town is pretty large, yet a new betrothal will be talked of for three whole weeks, and people run to the window if only a chaise rattles through the street. I can hardly imagine what any stranger could want here."

"My father and mother," said Eugenie, "lately met a gentleman stranger here, at the post-house, who particularly pleased my father. He was travelling in his own carriage," she added, in a surprisingly indifferent tone.

"I don't know who it was," said Caroline, in real and not feigned indifference; "we very seldom see a stranger of any importance in this place."

It really seemed an incomprehensible thing to Eugenie that all Dippelsburg had not been in a state of excitement on account of this mysterious apparition.

The delightful picnic to the ruins soon took place. Dippelsburg was quite large enough to have various coteries, and on this occasion the party consisted chiefly of the gentry and some government officers. It was, however, a very rustic affair. Those who were not good walkers rode to the entrance of the wood, and then all went

up in orderly procession, headed by a cart with a beer barrel (a true guiding star, although it rumbled noisily over the rugged path). A thick-headed boy from a farm led the horse, and a charming Hebe, in a gloriously bright pink dress, sat on the barrel, swaying to and fro, like Fortune on her wheel. Then followed the Dippelsburg band, consisting of flutes, clarions, trumpets, and oboes.

Disgusted as Eugenie had been at the bare thought of the desecration of the woodland solitudes by beer casks and cheese-eating, yet she could not but acknowledge to herself, that the encampment above there, at the foot of the ruins, was very cheerful, and even romantic, while the glasses were circulating among merry songs, and the young ladies were making great devastation among the daisies, putting all sorts of mysterious questions to them,* and where light garments glimmered through green bushes, and polite cavaliers chased after them to assist in botanical investigations. She herself, though indifferent to the great attention bestowed on her as a new phenomenon, sat under an ash, gazing up at the grey tower, and enjoying her quiet recollections of that strange event. She, too, gathered the flowers, and asked secretly, "Shall we meet again? yes, or no?" And when the last little petal which she

* This alludes to a custom in Germany in which young girls pull away the outer florets or ray of the daisy from the yellow disc, asking, "Does he love me? does he not love
&c.

plucked away promised that they should meet again, and gave the touching answer, "he loves thee in sorrow," then she laughed heartily, and wondered at her own childishness.

"Here is a grand discovery, ladies and gentlemen," said a young doctor, who might in some measure be called the jester of the party; holding up as he said so, on the end of a trumpet, a torn and washed-out leaf of a pocket-book which he had picked up on the grass; "who sent this flying on the winds, I wonder? A poet has been here some time or other, and left this behind him for our benefit. Pray all of you be silent!" And then, with the affectation of deep pathos, he began to declaim—

"I saw thee glancing from the wall
Of yonder ruin hoary,
And there it was that first of all
Began Life's earnest story.

"I bore thee down from that proud height
Like a child upon my arm,
Thy young heart trembling with affright
Near mine own so glad and warm.

"Mine was the bliss amid this shade
To choose thee for aye mine own;
Now, lonesome 'mid this woodland made,
It is mine to mourn thee gone."

"Oh, could I trace thy form divine
In the greenwood gliding here,
That I might but whisper, 'I am thine,
Sweet maiden,' in thine ear."

The company listened with more or less of attention. Some regarded the poem as a smuggled

production of the doctor's own, for they could remember having read some stanzas of his, which were printed in the weekly newspaper of the town, addressed, "To Thee," though they could never imagine who was the object of these verses; nor, indeed, did they trouble their heads much about them. Caroline would have liked to take it to herself, but could not discover throughout the lines a connexion between any passages of her life and the details of the poem. She had never, to her knowledge, stood at the top of the tower; and never, since she was a child, been carried in anyone's arms.

As for Eugenie, she sat with her head down, and her cheeks glowing deeply. She hardly ventured to look up, for she felt as if all eyes must be directed towards her, and as if everybody must guess that the poem related to her, while she herself drew from the verses a sweet warm sense of joy. However defective the verses might be in genius, yet no girl's heart will be quite indifferent to the first poem addressed to her, and she would have given worlds to possess the paper, but that was of course impossible. However, she could pretty well remember the lines, though heard but once, and they lived in her heart till the close of her life; these are things for which maidens have astonishing memories. She gradually perceived that no one guessed how well she understood the meaning of the flying leaf, and she soon mingled joyously with the party. The laughing and merriment grew

louder as the sun was sinking ; the doctor climbed the tower, and made an oration which won great applause ; and more fortunate than Eugenie, he kept his equilibrium in coming down, which was really surprising, considering the beer which the gentleman had contrived to swallow.

Eugenie heard little of all this speech, and not much of the singing, the music, and jesting which occurred on the way home ; her mind was fully occupied in revolving the verses of that page which had been borne to them in so marvellous a manner, and the words of which were perpetually echoing through her mind. And when the festivities were concluded by a little dancing, even then she was quiet and absent, and called forth the general censure for being a very haughty girl, who fancied herself one of the nobility because her father was a chief forester. She could not confide in Caroline, much as her full heart longed to impart the mysterious discovery to some kindred soul. Caroline's tittle-tattle about how foolish it was of Franciska, with her dark complexion, to think of wearing roses ; and how yellow Anna's white dress looked ; and how amiably the wife of the councillor of commerce behaved to the doctor, now that his practice was increasing, and that her daughter Sophie was already six-and-twenty—these things were no key to open the heart, so Eugenie at length fell asleep, gently murmuring to herself—

“ Oh, might I only tell thee
That I am all thine own.”

MEETING AGAIN.

Eugenie was at home once more, and was adapting herself more readily than ever to the solitude in which she dwelt—solitude which was, however, beginning to be more and more interrupted, to the great satisfaction of the lady of the chief forester, by calls and visits. Herr Von Plümer's mother, too, came to stay with the family for a few days. She was a very pretty old lady, to whom country air was very beneficial, for when at home she lived in a comfortless attic, in order that she might be able to reside at the capital, and to afford a toilette conformable to the place. Her little white blonde cap, and her grey silk dress, as well as her morning costume, were always faultless. The chief forester's lady gladly learnt from her what was now worn or no longer worn, or probably would soon be worn ; and in return she listened patiently to details of dreadful illnesses which Frau Von Plümer had passed through, and which she could have related for no other purpose than to prove how good a constitution she must have had to have survived them all.

Herr Von Plümer had long known that his mother was very fond of him, and he was uncommonly pleased to bend his slender, graceful form over her with child-like tenderness, or to let her lean on him while he played with the bow of her little cap. It must be confessed that when at home with her, in the attic, his attitudes were not

always so child-like, so chivalrous, and elegant ; for there he would roll about on her little sofa, and throw his legs up in the air. For all this, however, he was not a hypocrite, but a good sort of son enough ; and as Frau Von Plümer commonly talked to the mamma on the subject of her illnesses, so, on the other hand, she entertained Eugenie with the virtues of her son, which were of the negative kind. He was no drinker, no gambler, not even a smoker ; and so amazingly good-natured that he had on one occasion stolen a cracknel from his cousin in order to give it to a poor boy.

It was surprising with what indifference Eugenie heard the description of all these advantages, and how her manner grew rather colder than otherwise to this excellent son.

“ Frau Von Plümer wonderfully extols her son to you,” said her mother, laughing, when one evening she went upstairs with Eugenie to her little room, in order to look over her wardrobe. “ I don’t know, really, why you should be so particularly saucy and short with him. Don’t be too arrogant, young lady ; Herr Von Plümer is a good young man, and your father thinks he shall shortly be able to get the appointment of district forester for him. Though his mother is not rich, yet he is her only son. I don’t look so much at high position, and he is not to be despised.”

Eugenie sat at her little table by the window, through which she could see the ruins ; she was

leaning her head on her hands, but all at once she raised her glowing face, and looked at her mother with an expression such as that good lady had never seen before on her child's face.

"Mother," she said, "if the assistant were the handsomest man on earth, if he were a count or a prince, I would never have him."

"Why, do you know any harm of him?" was the reply.

"No, mother," she said softly; "but I know something better of another;" and then covering her face with her hands that her emotion might not be seen, she related the whole narrative of her rescue, and of the poem afterwards found in the wood.

Ah! the tale was soon told, and yet Eugenie considered that she had confided to her mother quite a long, long marvellous story. When Frau Horstig was able to put aside for a time all that mountain of little external cares, amongst which the first were, What is becoming? and How shall we dress ourselves? she was not wanting in either sense or feeling. She listened with deep sympathy to her daughter's confession, rejoiced that there was no more to confess, and though her manner was calm and cautious, yet she too indulged inwardly in some sanguine dreams on the subject. The most remarkable part of the story to her was that it should relate to the same young man with whom both she and her husband had felt so much pleased.

"Now, my child," she said, "you can't build a bridge on the foundation of a few verses of poetry ; so try and leave it all in the hands of God. There was something very remarkable in the young man certainly, but who knows whether he may not be very much above you, though to be sure a chief forester's daughter——"

"Pray, mother, say no more about it," said Eugenie ; "I believe nothing, and I expect nothing, only I thought it right to tell you, that you may understand why Herr Von Plümer is so uninteresting to me."

It is to be doubted whether mother or daughter that night thought most of the stranger, or which of them built the more brilliant castles in the air.

"Frau Von Plümer is just going to leave us," said the forester's lady a few days after this conversation ; "and she has not yet seen any of the wonders of Altenhausen, neither our church nor cloister ; we must take her to see them before she leaves."

Now, the old lady did not set much store by cloisters or churches, but she had been accustomed ever since her residence at the capital to see all sorts of remarkable places and things when the sight cost nothing, and she therefore bore the burden of the fatigue with patience.

It was early in the evening when the party walked through the remains of the old transept into the ancient and beautiful little church. Herr

Von Plümer placed himself forthwith against a grey pillar in the church, beside which his figure, clad in dark green, could not fail to show to advantage. Frau Von Plümer, as in duty bound, admired everything that was pointed out to her, mostly adding the remark, "It is wonderful to think, too, that people at that time were all Roman Catholics!"

As the sacristan had glided away up the aisle, and was leaving the well-known family to wander about the building as they pleased, he heard behind him the tread of a firm, elastic footstep. It was that of a stranger, who soon came following him into the church.

"You have come just at the right time," he said; "the little church shows so well at sunset." To which the interested stranger had remarked—

"Quite Gothic and romantic!" as he saw the rays streaming through the church window.

But as he gazed the stranger discovered a sight far superior to all these in the slight maiden figure on whose cheeks a rosy tint was deepening, and whose eyes shone brighter than the light of evening as she suddenly perceived him.

"Young lady!" exclaimed the stranger in his great surprise, for he did not know her name.

Eugenie saw that all the party had observed this mutual recognition, and she immediately recovered herself sufficiently to greet the young man politely, and to say in an easy manner, "I do not think,

father, you know this gentleman, or that you have been told of the great difficulty and danger from which he rescued me one day in the spring ;” and she now, in a light and merry tone, related her adventure. Herr Von Plümer meanwhile having relinquished his interesting position, was walking up and down the aisle.

The forester had a hearty laugh at the tale, and said, “That served that wild girl quite right, but you should have left her up there a little while in her difficulty. Oh no ! Eugenie, you have kept your secret very well. You know well enough that I can’t bear such stories. Once in our former home,” he added, “she thought proper to take a most romantic row across the river, over to a small green island, called Nightingale Valley, though there are more geese and ducks than nightingales in it ; but she steered in a wrong direction, and would have sailed fairly over the dam, if an old fisherman had not waded in, and drawn out the little boat to the land. However, I must now sincerely thank this gentleman, for it might have proved a serious affair. But, if I am not mistaken, we have met before.”

It was with much satisfaction that the sociable and friendly papa renewed the acquaintance commenced at the Dippelsburg post-house, while Herr Von Plümer somewhat sulkily dragged his mother on among some utterly insignificant old church benches.

"But it is getting dark," said the chief forester, suddenly; "what else are you going to do to-day, Herr——"

"Walter," added the stranger.

And mamma glanced significantly over at Eugenie. "Walter," thought she; "it is as I said before, just a name suited to some interesting traveller who chooses to remain unknown."

"I made some mistakes about my way to-day," said Herr Walter, "and left Dippelsburg rather later than I ought to have done; but I can get back there in good time. I have a little carriage at the station."

"I am glad that in spite of your carriage you still remember that you have a pair of legs of your own," said the chief forester. "I advise you, however, for to-day to go no farther than to our home, the forester's house; you can find quarters there, and by to-morrow's dawn you can look again more thoroughly over the cloisters and church, and yet get to Dippelsburg in good time."

Walter's courteous protests broke down before the hospitality of the kind-hearted forester, who little guessed how much happiness he had conferred on two hearts by this invitation. The mother too felt very happy. "Surely this may be a leading of Providence," she said to herself. Besides this, she could just now very well bear to have a visitor brought in unexpectedly, as, having Frau Von Plümer for a guest, she was well prepared ~~with~~ suitable dinners, suppers, or whatever might

be needed ; so she very kindly expressed her sanction of her husband's invitation.

And now, in the twilight of the summer eve, they all went home, and Eugenie and Herr Walter found themselves together. What did they talk about ? Oh, the words would seem very unmeaning if they stood here, cold and lifeless on the paper, but there were two young hearts which very well knew how to read between the lines. They soon understood each other, and though Walter could not now feel the beating of Eugenie's heart, yet both quite knew when they entered the old house among the forests what were the feelings of each towards the other.

For one minute only Eugenie ran up into her own room, only one minute ; yet it was quite enough for her in the full hope of coming days to glance once more at her much-loved wood, and in a low, whispered prayer to say, " It is Thy hand that gives me this love. Oh, bind it fast for ever. Into Thy hands I resign myself."

The conversation downstairs at the supper table was carried on chiefly by the forester and his guest ; and it soon became very pleasant and animated. Herr Walter's travels were talked over, and his descriptions were so good and graphic that they quite astonished Frau Von Plümer. But the question which burned in the heart of the mother, far more than in that of the daughter, was, " Who is he ?" This at present had not clearly shown itself. To Eugenie it was quite a matter of

indifference; she thought of the words of the poet—

“Yes, were thy birth e’en from the lowliest taken,
Yet must thou still my own love be;
All freedom have I and all choice forsaken.”

Even papa seemed not altogether without curiosity on the subject. “How is it, Herr Walter,” he asked after awhile, “that you have so soon come back to stay at Dippelsburg? The town would have little in any way remarkable to show to one who has travelled so much.”

Walter coloured deeply, as indeed did Eugenie, who could have easily answered the question. “The neighbourhood has,” he said, “become really very attractive to me;” and then added, in a somewhat hesitating manner, “I came here partly in the way of business. I travel for a commercial house in Frankfurt.”

Did the young man feel conscious at that moment that Eugenie’s heart stood still? that her mother looked as if she had suddenly been drenched with cold water? and did he see that a scornful smile played over Herr Von Plümer’s features at this simple and natural remark?

Papa being the only one of the party who felt the same interest in people of all ranks and circumstances, was the only one who remained unembarrassed. “Well, really!” he said, in a careless way, “I have always fancied that I could discover, in the course of a very short conversation, exactly the occupation and position of the people

ith whom I talked ; but I should never have
essed that you were a man of business."

"It was not my own choice," said Walter, "that
d me to mercantile pursuits ; but it was the
ecided wish of an uncle who has filled the place
f a father towards me, and I have learned that
ven this engagement has its pleasant side."

"Certainly ; the nice journeys which you get by
ese means, and the excellent opportunity which
gives you of acquiring a knowledge of life and
haracter, are something," said Herr Von Plümer,
ther scornfully.

"Certainly," replied Walter, drily.

The forester talked on calmly, listening with
al interest to Walter's information respecting the
ature and method of his commercial transactions ;
ut the young man had nearly all the conversa-
on to himself, papa only now and then putting
a polite word ; and it was perhaps a relief to
ll parties when Frau Von Plümer, who on account
f the last but one of the bilious fevers which she
ad had required a long night's rest, went off early
o bed.

Frau Horstig felt for a moment inclined to carry
ff the embroidered sofa pillow, and some other
legant articles of furniture with which she had
ndeavoured to make the second-best bedroom fit
or the reception of the interesting stranger ; but
he soon felt ashamed of herself, and left them in
heir place. *How* different, too, were the feelings
ith which Eugenie now entered her room from

those with which her heart had been full only two hours since. How dissatisfied she felt with Herr Walter, with her own prospects, with everybody, and most of all with herself. Ah ! she had never longed for rank or wealth ; she would have been ready enough to share the lot of a poor poet, an exile—any lot indeed which had something of elevation and misfortune in it ; but the travelling agent of a mercantile house did indeed seem prosaic. In vain she said to herself that this was a respectable position, and that those things only which did occasionally render it otherwise—frivolous manners, superficial education, and shallowness of intellect—could none of them be found in Herr Walter ; yet it did jar sadly against all her dreams poetic. And then, too, it seemed to her as if he had acted out a sort of falsehood, when he allowed her feelings towards him to proceed so far without having ever once hinted at the nature of his engagements.

The pious sentiments with which Eugenie had so lately left her love and her future life in the hands of God had now died away. Her own heart, her own will, were just now uppermost ; and had she at this moment been calm and right-hearted enough to do so, she would have acknowledged how insincere had been all her recent professed acquiescence in God's will. She would have seen that she had never in real heartiness sought at all to know what was the will of God—that at best she had wished only for the Divine confirmation of her own.



The young maiden walked out early next morning after her short sleep, rendered the more unrefreshing by her exciting dreams, and entered the little high-walled garden which surrounded the house of the forester. The fresh breeze of morning played over her hot brow ; the clear daylight was better for her in the present mood of mind than the romantic moonlight would have been. It dispelled all mists, and enabled her to take a clearer insight into her own heart and life. A man's footstep was heard behind her, and, commercial agent or not, she felt her heart beat the stronger while it drew nearer, for it was Herr Walter's.

The young man looked even more pale and wearied than did Eugenie.

"Excuse me, Fraulein Horstig," said he, in a formal tone, quite unlike any with which he had formerly addressed her, "will you allow me, before I take leave of your parents, to say farewell to you, and to ask your forgiveness?"

"Forgiveness!—for what?" said Eugenie, uneasily, and without looking up.

"It seems, Fraulein," continued the young man, more frankly, "that you have been deceived as to my position in life. I said yesterday that it had not been my own choice, but it had never hitherto occurred to me that I had any reason to be ashamed of it. Last evening, however, when I had occasion to speak of it, I became aware at once that I had, perhaps even almost involuntarily, withheld myself from stating it, from a half-suspicion that it

might alter your opinion of me ; forgive me, then, if I am guilty of having misled you, and let me hope that the remembrance of our short intercourse will be in no way painful to you ; the commercial traveller shall never more cross your path."

"But purer and loftier feelings had awaked in Eugenie's heart while Herr Walter was speaking. "How could you think?" she said, and the eyes now raised to him were moistened by her inward emotions, "how could you suppose that any consideration so wholly external could influence my feelings?"

Eugenie said more than she had wished to say—more than in honour she ought to have said ; but his remarks had touched her feelings.

"I should possess very little of that knowledge of human nature which Herr Von Plümer was good enough to give me credit for," said Herr Walter, "if I had not felt how great an impression was made upon you all yesterday by my simple statement of the nature of my employment. I believe," he added, smiling faintly, "if I had declared myself to be some terrible, renowned brigand, some noble regicide, or a traitor to my country, it would have hardly shaken you all more, than my merely stating that I was a mercantile man."

Eugenie's blushes and downcast looks assured Walter that he was right ; and, strange to say, there was, after all, a manliness and sense of inward superiority on his side, that rendered him near

and dearer to her than any timid homage could have done.

"Oh, you are laughing at me," she said, in some confusion ; "certainly if I——"

"I will not take any advantage of the generous emotions of this moment," the young man continued, while Eugenie was hesitating for the right expression. "I dare not stay longer, but, Fraulein, permit me yet to hope—not to expect—at any rate, to hope is not much."

She laid her hand for a moment in that which he was putting forth with such earnest pleading.

"I must go in now," she said, blushing, as he hurried away, and Walter had no desire at that moment for any other answer.

DECISION.

It was at that beautiful though pensive season of the year when the woodlands begin to don their varied hues of red, and green, and gold, just as in olden days the nun decked herself in her richest festal garb when she was about to resign for ever all the splendour and joy of life. Everything was going on quietly in the forester's household. The guests had departed. Even Herr Von Plümer had taken his leave. He had been invited to a wedding, where he hoped to cut a good figure, and he pictured himself as sitting at table in the midst of the white-clad bridesmaids, where his closely-fitted

dark-green uniform would show to great advantage between the airy white dresses. The glorious period had not as yet arrived when the form of even the portliest man placed between two ladies looks only like a dusky herring between two lightly-swinging barrels. In those days, too, one could really see young maidens' figures, and could yet at the same time admire their elegant and floating drapery.

Eugenie thought very little about this, nor how Herr Von Plümer would look on the occasion. Her heart was occupied with graver thoughts Hermann Walter had written ; he had stated his circumstances fully and explicitly.

His father, who had held some civil appointment, had died early in life, and a cousin of his mother, a wealthy tradesman living in a small town, had adopted him and treated him in every respect as if he were his own son. It was the inflexible determination, however, of this godfather and guardian that Hermann should, like himself, be engaged in commerce, in order that at some future time he might take in his own hands the business which his godfather had also inherited, and which had been the source of the good property possessed both by him and by his parents before him, for Hermann's cousin valued this business almost as a knight might prize his ancestral halls.

Hermann had submitted to the dictation of his uncle chiefly for the sake of his mother, as his

natural taste would have influenced him to choose some scientific employment. His cousin, pleased with his conduct, had willingly afforded him every means for extensive and varied mental culture, and had given him the opportunity of foreign travel and of residing at different times in large towns of other parts of the continent, without taking into consideration the probability that a life like this would be likely to render him disinclined to the proposed destination, even if not absolutely unfit for it. The more Hermann's mind became refined and enlarged by the intellectual enjoyments of large cities and by his attention solely to the wholesale part of business, the less did he feel disposed to bury himself in an obscure general shop of the little town of Dietmannsweiler; and it had been merely to escape this position that he had lately accepted the engagement of a mercantile traveller, as Cousin Bürner would not hear of his taking any employment that would fix him in a thoroughly permanent situation. He could not venture to offer to Fraulein Eugenie a future lot which he himself had shrunk from, but he hoped by a hearty and resolute statement of the matter to his cousin that he might gain his consent to undertake a very advantageous situation which had been proposed to him as accountant in a large banking business in the capital. He had indeed outlived his uncle's guardianship, but he could certainly never renounce his relative's just claim upon him, yet by the means which he proposed Fraulein Eugenie

would have little to experience of anything which might make a mercantile life unpleasant; "and," he added, "my salary would allow me, without the assistance of my guardian, on whom I should feel unwilling to make any demand, to offer her a position which if but a modest one would not be, however, altogether unfitted for her."

In a letter which accompanied this and was addressed to Eugenie herself, Hermann Walter allowed his heart to speak out fully; it was a pure and warm heart, and the letter showed that he entirely trusted her. Eugenie felt that it would be impossible to say no to his letter. Her father and mother were not particularly elated by this wooing. Papa especially felt that he should find it very hard to part with his child. He was uncommonly fond of having things remain just as they are, and looked forward with positive pain to the prospect of such a revolution as the marriage of his only daughter would necessarily occasion. It is possible too that even he had, without being conscious of it, anticipated more brilliant prospects for her. This latter feeling was openly confessed by the mother. Painful as the parting would prove to her, yet, like most mothers, she had cherished in secret no dearer wish than that her child might one day be a happy wife; but by being a happy wife she meant something more than the possession of happiness—all sorts of pleasant accompaniments—rank, title, riches, and good family; there was nothing of all this, and she saw no

reason whatever why yes should be said to the very first proposal. But Eugenie confessed to her parents that she really loved Hermann Walter, and that she believed she should be happy with him. His sincere, earnest, religious character, his prayer that God would guide her decision according to His holy will, had awakened afresh the deeper, truer feelings of her heart, the real poetry of her love, and her parents were by no means disposed to play the part of tyrants.

"Settle it between yourselves," said the father to his wife. "I see no reason why the child should marry so early; but, after all, a tradesman, if he is honourable, and well established, is just as welcome to me as another man. Eugenie, to be sure, would hardly be in her place behind a counter."

"Behind a counter!" the bare idea overcame, almost paralysed the mother. "Well," she said, "we must at all events firmly insist on it that Herr Walter at once enters upon his engagement in the banking-house at the capital;" and then she added, addressing Eugenie, "I see no reason why you may not be quite in the same position as other young ladies. Your uncle the colonel, and your aunt living at the Presidency, will be a little astonished at first; but really in the present day some of the most elegant women marry people connected with trade. Yes," continued the good mamma, warming more and more with her subject, "I believe that marriage with men engaged in mercantile pursuits will come still more and more into

fashion—there really is a sort of fashion in such things. A few years ago one heard of nothing else than engagements with parsons ; daughters of the wealthiest and most distinguished families would marry parsons, and then they went and settled down in some obscure corner, from which, after a few years, they would emerge with a tribe of little children, all in dresses and hats of the last century. And now, in our time, one hears much more of engagements to merchants. Indeed, has not Councillor Paul's daughter, at this very time, accepted a banker ?”

Eugenie gave very little heed to her mother's spirited and attractive description of the light in which people now regarded men of business as they did black silk mantles ; that is, that they were becoming all the fashion. The cold breath of the world passed uncared for, and the fresh young love that knew nothing about rank or position, bloomed, as of old, in her young heart. She thought of nothing now but of Hermann's deep blue eyes, and of his earnest and affectionate words ; she dreamed, too, of that pretty spot on the rocky hill, where he hoped some day to build a house, and she felt that she would ever feel as secure and safe with him as she felt on that day when he carried her down from the tower. So she sat at the window which looked over the green woods to the old castle, and wrote the letter containing her ov ing consent.

Hermann himself could never have imagined

anything more affectionate and delightful than this letter. Whether the father's letter, which was inspired by the mother, was pervaded by the feeling that the youth ought to deem it a great honour to obtain the hand of the daughter of a Chief Forester, and could never do enough to prove himself worthy of her, this we know not; but when Hermann came over to pay his first visit, and to obtain the confirmation of the "yes" from Eugenie's own lips, then all was joy and peace.

And now that the chief forester's consent had been given entirely, both parents felt a real pleasure in seeing the happy pair in the same house with them, and day by day new stories occurred to one or another, of merchants who both in ancient and modern times had risen to great eminence and wealth. Had the mother whose daughter's happiness lay so near her heart, who had pondered so carefully on all the external circumstances, had she even thought of that question in connexion with marriage which our form of betrothal so beautifully, so simply expresses, in the words "that each may help the other on the way to heaven?" "Of course, that is the chief thing," she would have replied if the question had been asked, and she would have believed that she thought so; and she quite agreed in that part of Hermann Walter's letter which seemed to give a guarantee for the reality of his religious convictions. But whether the assurance that he really had been the rich and distinguished stranger for whom they had once

taken him might not have determined her decision much sooner than the belief that he was a man who feared God, and one by whose means all that was best in her child's character would be developed, we will not express an opinion.

There are among the women of our day few who could be regarded as infidels or free-thinkers, much less scoffers at religion ; but there are many, very many, who think very lightly of that path of which it is written, "few there be that find it." They know and believe that a glorious and royal inheritance has been purchased for us at an inestimable cost ; they know that eternal happiness or unhappiness depends on our attaining this inheritance ; but they are very calm and indifferent on the question whether they are indeed on the right road towards it. They can take great pains about many things, but the highest and noblest good they often seem to think must come quite of itself. May they not some day, when too late, awake with the question of agonized astonishment, "Lord, when saw we Thee, and did not minister unto Thee ?"

WEDLOCK.

And Eugenie became the young wife—became Frau Walter—to the secret dissatisfaction of her mother, who had always been adverse to the proposed connexion.

Frau Horstig did not fail, however, duly to

inform her relatives and acquaintances that Herr Walter was fitted by his education to be even a professor of a university, and had besides every prospect of inheriting considerable property from a very wealthy cousin, after which he could easily get the title of a member of the Board of Commerce, if he happened to care for it. Everything was very good—very “stylish” was the watchword of the forester’s lady, as she described the arrangements of the newly-formed establishment.

“We really must do something beyond the common,” said mamma to the father, “so that our Eugenie may not be regarded as any ordinary tradesman’s wife.”

The forester silently drew out his purse, and walked off into the wood; but mamma drove away to the capital, the shops of Dippelsburg were not nearly extensive enough, laid siege to whole warehouses, had towering bales of furniture, curtains, &c., piled up before her, and camel-loads dragged to the house of the aunt, the colonel’s lady, where high councils were held respecting them. She travelled with motherly heroism through furniture-stores and warehouses, till at length pretty well the whole sum which the father could spare for dowry was fairly expended. Eugenie, who set little value on all these splendours, was positively frightened whenever mamma met an acquaintance who had thought of some fresh elegant plague of a chiffonnier, a what-not, a carved bracket, an ottoman, a lovely little lounging-chair, or some other sort of

luxury which ought to be found in every lady's home.

The cousins at the colonel's smiled scornfully at their aunt, who was trying by all this style to elevate Eugenie's poor connexion. But mamma in her zeal never noticed that people here and there shrugged their shoulders at the assumption of mercantile families. "It is in excellent style!" this was her daily expression.

Hermann Walter would have very gladly made the modest request that instead of this extreme gentility he might have received with his wife only a moderate sum of money as dowry, but that would have been dreadfully vulgar; and summon up his manly independence as he would, he could never quite get rid of the oppressive feeling that he was only tolerated by the distinguished family, and so he made every effort not to remind them perpetually that he was in trade.

Cousin Bürner, down in Dietmannsweiler, had, with fatherly kindness at least, if not with full satisfaction, given his consent to Hermann's entering on the engagement at the capital, and thus wrote to his young relative:—

"I would not place any hindrance in the way of your matrimonial connexion with the said lady, nor your entrance on the above-named situation. On the contrary, I wish that the Divine blessing may attend you. I shall live in hopes that in due time I will be content to undertake my business at

this place, where, with God's help, I mean yet to carry it on for some time myself. I remain, therefore, with repeated congratulations, and prayers for every blessing,—Your very affectionate Cousin."

Most gladly would Hermann have taken his betrothed to see his fatherlike friend, feeling quite certain that all the old gentleman's prejudices would quite vanish in presence of Eugenie's amiable manners and heart; but to make a journey of six hours alone with her—that was impossible. The customs of the world have become so extremely refined that no one seems to see how much hidden vulgarity lies at the root of the idea that he to whom a man entrusts his child for life cannot be trusted with her as his betrothed, when she ought surely to be doubly sacred to him, even for a walk or drive of a few hours. No, a guard of honour must travel with them. And who could it be? Not the mother. Hermann could not overcome his reluctance to let her enter the shop smelling of tobacco and cheese. The bare thought that such a lot had been ever thought of for her daughter would be an annoyance to her. Still less could he have taken the elegant cousin, whose whole stock of patchouli could not have overpowered these vulgar odours. The chief forester, who certainly would have got on best with the old uncle, could not leave home, so the visit had been necessarily deferred till after the marriage.

The wedding trip up the Rhine had been

delightful, the fulfilment of all Eugenie's girlish dreams—nothing but happiness and poetry. Hermann was quite content to lay the merchant aside for awhile, though this was the very thing which he had formerly so toiled to work himself into, and to be nothing but the happy husband of a dear, loving wife; to look into her dark eyes, and quietly to embrace her as she stood alone with him on the deck, the wind waving her blue veil to and fro. Yet it did at times rather annoy him to observe what pains Eugenie took not to betray his calling—this good and honest calling—and how much rather she would have been taken for a baroness, or even for the wife of an idle tourist, than the happy bride of a highly-educated accountant in a banking-house; but she will get over that weakness in time, he said to himself by way of comfort; and so he was happy in the fair present.

Although, in this spring-time of love, his counting-house did not appear to Hermann in the light of an earthly Paradise, yet as the end of their journey drew near, he felt some pleasure in the thought of taking possession of it, though he might not have confessed so much to Eugenie; and he felt no reluctance to commence the busy vocation appointed for him, and from which he was to return so often to a happy home.

They came home. Mamma had arranged everything in the best order, and only remained there to receive the young couple. Then, with a pocket-

ful of unpaid bills, she returned to her impatient spouse, who gave vent to all his heart-yearnings after the society of his child by a continual railing at this unnecessary marriage.

Eugenie's transport at the sight of her prettily-furnished house quite satisfied her mother's expectation, and increased her admiration of her own work.

"I am sure, Eugenie, that your aunt, the colonel's wife, when she sees your rooms, can never say again every time—and other people cannot say——" What the aunt and the people had said, and could never say again, remained unrevealed.

"A very handsome present in money was sent here for you, my dear son, during your absence," said Frau Horstig. "It came from your cousin, for whom I have a very great respect. I thought, therefore, I should be acting according to your wishes if I purchased with it a large cheval glass for Eugenie, that splendid carpet in the sitting-room, and green silk coverlets for the beds."

The dear son smiled his assent, though the smile was bitter-sweet. He would gladly have applied the cousin's gift to defraying the expenses of the wedding journey.

"The carpet is really *unique!*" the delighted mother exclaimed repeatedly. The Countess Kulm came in after it was laid down, and said she had never seen one nearly so beautiful; and then those fashionable quilts, with their tasteful tassels! No

one looking at the bed would ever take it to be a bed."

"I don't see the use of that," remarked Hermann, with some hesitation; "why should it be more beautiful for my bed to look like a billiard-table than a bed with a clean white coverlet?"

"I am certainly surprised, my dear son," said mamma, somewhat piqued, "that in all your travels you have never observed that it is always the aim, in every house of any distinction, to have no beds seen. Now you might throw all your rooms open, and not one would be known to be there."

Why this should be so grand, the unthankful son did not even now discern, and even Eugenie said, "But, mamma, you have a most charming bed-room at home, and everybody admired it very much."

"That is in the country," said her mother, who had herself within the last few weeks learned a great deal that was new to her respecting "establishments of distinction;" "and besides, your father is there known as chief forester. Everyone knows that. There is no need for him to make his position; but it is quite different with young people. You understand what I mean, surely, my dear son?"

The dear son quite understood her; his smile, however, was once more bitter-sweet.

The mother had departed, and the newly-married people started under the auspices of their aunt at the Presidency, and their aunt the colonel's wife. Pleasant domestic life for which Hermann had

so much yearned was long in coming. First of all, they had visits to pay to several families who were friends of Herr Walter. No one had anything to say against the handsome couple, and the bride's new acquaintances believed the touching story which the aunt at the Presidency had, by means of hints and half-spoken words, spread among the æsthetic portion of her circle—a story of a romantic love affair which had begun in a ruined castle—a sort of carrying off the lady, so that the parents were obliged to say yes, in order that they might not break the heart of their only child. She only suffered this to be inferred, however, in these æsthetic circles, in which it made the young wife very interesting; but she left it so vague, that she could disavow it among sober-minded families, where it might cause scandal.

The aunt, the colonel's lady, struck no chord of romance in her circle in order to procure her niece's introduction. The tale which she had to tell was of the rich cousin, who, at each relation of the history, grew more and more wonderful, till he seemed at length to be some mysterious nabob, or like the miser in the picture-book, who sits in a gloomy cavern brooding over countless sacks of gold. It was impossible to imagine what a handsome house her niece would have when the said miser, who was now nearly a hundred years old, closed his eyes to this world, an event which must infallibly happen one of these days. So the way was extremely well paved for the young wife.

As soon as the first round of calls had been made, the aunts came to introduce Eugenie into their own circle of friends.

"We cannot expect you to make all these calls with us," they said to Hermann; "but of course you will not wish to withdraw your wife entirely from the sphere to which she has always been accustomed."

"By no means," said Hermann, gulping down the pill. He had lately heard so much of circles and circles, that it seemed as if a circle was whirling round in his head.

The wife of the banker who was Hermann's principal had received Eugenie very graciously, though with an air of condescension, and had invited her to an evening party, where indeed there were only merchants, rich, elegant, and often agreeable; but the banker's lady moved also occasionally in more aristocratic circles, and she might have made an addition to the party of some persons of distinction.

"Do not vex yourself about it, Eugenie," said her aunt, the president's lady; "you shall one of these days find admission into drawing-rooms in which that proud lady could not venture to set her foot. But do not allow yourself to be drawn into an inferior circle of society among your husband's friends, where you will meet many persons who are in retail trade. Certainly in the very highest society in which we visit, and where the minister of state often comes, certainly it is impossible, I am sorry to say, for me to introduce you there,

because the company is very select. In the next class, even that which I should call the middle circle of society here, people never talk or dance with any to whom they are not introduced ; but in the upper circle no one even looks at those who have not had a distinct introduction."

Eugenie could not at this moment help thinking of her cook, who returned one evening very much delighted from a dance, saying, "You wouldn't believe how genteel it was ; there were only saddlers and bakers there ; a journeyman bricklayer, indeed, wished to come in, but they immediately threw him down the stairs."

"But in the middle class," continued the aunt, after reflecting a little, "the class to which, indeed, the colonel's family belong, it may be done. It will be very difficult, but I am determined to carry it through."

And so Hermann and his wife got into the middle class, which consisted chiefly of civil and military officers, and bankers' families. They admitted the pretty wife. The freshness, the youthfulness of her character, a certain air of the woods which yet lingered about her, gave a novelty and attractiveness to her appearance. She became in due time quite the fashion, and was overwhelmed with invitations. They thought even the husband very nice, though he was rather tolerated than sought.

Hermann Walter felt this ; it vexed him a little, and wearied him much. But he put up with it

all for the sake of his young wife, in order that he "might not quite withdraw her from her accustomed sphere." He only desired that she should not break off all intercourse with his own old acquaintances. In order to convince them that he, at any rate, did not mean to do so, he went now, for the first time, to the club of "Grass Widowers," as it was humorously called, which had originally been founded by a number of young mercantile men while their wives were absent at the baths; and in order to follow this example of humility, Eugenie was induced to make one of a coterie of the wives of these young men. It cost much time and trouble to fulfil properly all these obligations, and to steer harmoniously through the different circles; to patronize, or suffer herself to be patronized; to know in what case it was proper to seem to give a very simple entertainment, and when more luxurious parties should be given; and meantime it cost a wonderful amount of money to cover the expense of all this: so that the whole of Walter's salary, from which he had hoped gradually to lay by a sum with which on some future day to establish business on his own account—yes, the whole of it—would now scarcely suffice for their expenditure.

And where were now the beautiful home-life, the peace and quiet of his own fireside, of which Hermann had dreamed so fondly? the comfortable evenings when, with an affectionate, industrious, and intellectual wife, he could once more resume his long-loved studies, that he had of late

compelled almost wholly to relinquish? "It only be for a little while, just at first," said nie to comfort him, when he came home at from the counting-house, and instead of see- the cloth laid for dinner, found elegant ladies g on the sofa, and he himself compelled to up and down the next room, because he was red to come in and play the agreeable, until at h the siege was raised, and the over-cooked could be brought into the dining-room.

was no uncommon thing too for Hermann, in the evening he looked forward to a walk his pleasant companion, to receive the message, ladies are all gone to take tea with the wife e chief councillor." Sometimes, on a Sunday, he and Eugenie had both been to church her, handsomely dressed, and had heard a her who was just then in fashion, and had vards made a succession of short calls, Her- was expected in the afternoon to join a large for a long country walk. When there, in- they refreshed themselves temperately enough a glass of milk or beer; but the conversation s scanty as the refreshment, so that they came quite wearied out. On some evenings, when nged to read a new book to his wife, he that a plan had been made for them both fresh their spirits by a visit to the theatre, that they really must go, in order that their usive subscription might not have to be paid ut their deriving any good from it.

"It will only be like this just at first." He believed Eugenie when she said so, and waited patiently, like that stranger in London who remained a whole day standing at the door of an hotel, only because he wished to stay till the worst of the crowd had gone by. The throng in Hermann's case did not pass by, and the time long waited for never came.

And did Eugenie, who had been brought up in the simplest habits of life, rush wholly delighted and intoxicated into this bewilderment of pleasure, into this whirlpool of social life? Ah no! it was often a heavy yoke to her, and those who could have heard her sigh forth when a fresh invitation arrived, "So soon again!" would surely have deeply sympathized with the young wife.

"But pray now do decline it for this once," said Hermann, persuasively, on one occasion. "Surely, it is not absolutely necessary that you should go."

"It will not do to decline to-day, dear," said Eugenie; "indeed, I ought to consider it a great honour that Frau Eichstett invites me; my aunt at the Presidency would never forgive me if I did not go."

"And to-morrow, what's to be done to-morrow?" inquired Hermann, somewhat ironically.

"To-morrow," said Eugenie, somewhat piqued, "Frau Zwiebel has invited me to go there; you know it is your own wish that I should keep

up some intimacy with your own old friends and acquaintances."

"And the day after to-morrow?" asked Hermann.

"Now you may laugh if you please," rejoined Eugenie, "but I positively must invite Major Breitskopf's wife and her sister-in-law, for she was expressly introduced to me, and you know how intimate they are at the Colonel's. I really hope after that," added the economical wife, thoughtfully, "that I may be able to manage to have them all here together. The Bartensteins and the Maiers at all events will get on well enough, if I only knew that Frau Rumpel and Frau Steinmann would decline coming. I think they have company staying there—then I could get through this party quite cleverly, and it has for a long time been quite a burden to me."

"Now," said Hermann, laughing, "if their declining the invitation seems so desirable a possibility to you, don't you think they might survive it if you now and then declined one?"

"We never can quite understand one another on this point," said Eugenie, with tears in her eyes. "I feel vexed that even you do not believe how I often long after a really quiet, peaceful life, when I may get into a regular course of occupation, and when we can take long beautiful walks together. But I suppose life in a large city is always like this, and remember, it was not my choice."

It was quite true when Eugenie said that she longed for more repose. The poetry which she



had in her woodland home was not altogether stifled by the tinsel which some people call "society," and the "duties one owes to society." She often thought over, very sorrowfully, the dreams of her girlhood of the happiness of mutual love. "If Hermann had only been a poor political exile," she said to herself, with a sigh, "with whom I should have been obliged to hide myself in retirement, or a clergyman in a rural parsonage grown over with vines, and having a flower-garden in front, how happy we should have been."

Hermann, too, was often a discontented husband, and on his part went off to billiard tables, museums, reading-rooms, and clubs; and Eugenie had never yet been able to find out the right day and hour when she might ask for money; a problem which, be it said in passing, many poor women cannot solve all their lives long. But it was strange that with all her longing for rest, she should yet have every morning to think over, "What's to be done to-day?" and should feel an uncomfortable void when a few days passed without any fresh invitation, or when a Sunday went off with scarcely any calls. On such occasions as the latter the married pair usually went out for a walk together; but here Eugenie would feel worried by being obliged to think over what subjects she could talk on with her husband. The society which they frequented together, or each alone, really seldom afforded any materials to help their conversation, and all deep intercourse of

feeling, all genuine interchange of thought, needs some degree of fostering care. In the real friendship of two men even, it is not necessary that there should be strife or jealousy, nor any great event, to break the thread of mutual confidence so entirely that it can with difficulty be knitted again.

"It is the fault of your position, my dear," said the aunt, the president's lady, when Eugenie one day complained to her of the incessant disquietude produced by all her efforts. "It is that your position renders it so desirable that you should not break off intercourse with either circle, and that is so very fatiguing; with us, things of this kind are much easier."

Was it really the position only, and is not every position and its difficulties a problem which God gives to us, and which we ought so to solve that something good may come out of it to God's glory? "Place me where Thou wilt, oh my God, so that I can only see Thee still," I once heard a pious aged woman say. Was Eugenie standing in such a place that she could still see her God? It seemed as if the mist which veiled from her the true Light of life was one which might so easily be dissipated; yet the Light was veiled, and Eugenie learnt to content herself with a dispiriting gloom. Strange thoughts came upon her one day, when she turned over the leaves of an old diary which she had begun just after her confirmation; and when she recalled those happy feelings of youthful

devotion, at a time when she had written out of her own earnest heart, the words—

“Though all others faithless wander,
Still shall I bide true to Thee.”

Often too she thought of that evening of her betrothal when she climbed up to the spot where she and Hermann had first stood alone together, and where she offered a silent prayer. And now all had become so changed. She knew not how it was, and yet she had gone to church every Sunday, at least when the weather was not too bad, and the heat or the cold not too great, and yet she had that too which is so rare in the present day, a religious husband.

Hermann Walter had, indeed, some religious convictions. The blessing of a believing, praying mother, and of a Christian training, had followed him from his early home. He did not feel ashamed of his God; a shame which, as an old Negro once said, was a phenomenon that occurred only among Christians, and never with Turks nor heathens. It was some fear of God in his heart that amidst all the temptations which, in his position, in an especial manner threatened him, had yet preserved his heart from much that was evil, and had kept his life unspotted. But he had found so little sympathy or aid in his recent companionship. His life had of late been a restless and far from domestic one, and it had become with him, as it was with that baron who declared that he

nuch religion, but made very little use of it. a desire and a longing after something better remained within him ; and even though he had at first led to Eugenie by his warm human only, and not by the desire of heavenly good, e had really hoped to find in her a spirit which d help his own to rise higher on the path of t and Life. He had been accustomed at home e in the wife the guardian of the holy fire e domestic hearth ; and he had quite a con- ; trust that faith and piety were the inalien- birthright of every truly good wife ; and gh in all other respects he was a man who learned to guide himself, yet in this matter ould gladly have been led onward by a dear loving hand, hoping with her, and through elp, to attain what he yet felt was wanting n, a firm, deep, religious faith, and the true of the humble believer. It had been his and hers also, by family worship, by united ng and study of the Scriptures, to advance inner life, and to consecrate their home to God. owever, this did not begin at first, and the went on, and it yet never came to this, so he to comfort himself by degrees with the idea after all, the affections of the heart and right iples of conduct must be the main thing ; and ce Eugenie, learned to make a formal visit Sunday to the good God. They said of the on on Sunday, "It was very good ;" or "There ot much in it ;" and so they lived in peace,

as people say, and neither asked the other, neither ventured to ask themselves, "Is this the happiness you hoped for and dreamed about?"

Far, far away the green woods were rustling, and their solitary paths lay in silence and shadow. The voices to which Hermann and Eugenie had listened there they could hear no longer in the busy streets amid the tumult of men and the rattle of carriages. But at length the time arrived when they could find an opportunity of paying a visit to the cousin at Dietmannsweiler, a place which lay pretty far removed from the bustle of town life. On this occasion they had the rare enjoyment of driving out together, and they both felt that there was something very refreshing to their spirits in flying along alone with each other through that lovely, and to Eugenie unknown neighbourhood. In the soft stillness of the autumn day their hearts beat quicker, their eyes sought each other, and Eugenie's hand rested in her husband's. To Eugenie all this was indescribably precious.

"After all, how delightful it would be to live out in the quiet country," said Hermann. "We will not make too sure of that till we see Dietmannsweiler," said Eugenie, smiling more happily than she had smiled for a long time past, resting her head on Hermann's shoulder, and looking up to him pleasantly, tired though she was.

"Oh, dearest, why is it not all as it might be?" sighed the husband.

Eugenie drew closer towards him and pressed

his hand, but she was silent. It did not occur to her to seek for the fault in herself, and she thought that circumstances, that great scapegoat of the world's guilt, must be to blame. Yet at this moment she did not care to accuse them.

"You must not expect much conversation from my cousin," said Hermann, by way of preparing her; "he is of so silent a nature that at one period of my boyhood, for three whole years I carried him the newspaper daily, without ever hearing him utter a word, except once, when during my father's illness he asked 'How is your father?' and I ran home in pure astonishment, calling out, 'Papa, papa! my uncle has spoken!' He once agreed to join a large party in a long sledging excursion. My little sister Marie sat beside him in the same carriage, and by a sudden turn the sledge struck against a corner of the road, and the child fell out into the snow. My cousin remained sitting quite still in the carriage, till the terrified doctor who had been driving, and who had now reached the end of his journey, said suddenly, 'Why, where is the child?' 'She has fallen out,' said my cousin. 'But why on earth,' he answered, 'did you not call out for help?' 'I did not see,' he said, fretfully, 'that I need compel myself to speak; those who came up behind have, of course, picked her up long ago.'"

Eugenie burst into a fit of laughter. "Then we need not exert ourselves in conversation," she said.

"Well," continued Hermann, "if he has not

said much, he has done a good deal. If he did let my little sister lie on the snow, yet for all that he raised my mother from poverty and distress, so that the poor delicate child wanted for nothing to the day of her death; and he has been, without saying many words about it, a true brother to my mother, and a father to me."

"But he forced you to be in trade," said Eugenie.

"You should not stir up again continually all the things which I have myself got over," said Hermann, with a slight look of reproach. "He meant it well, and provided for me to the best of his knowledge and belief. None of my more grand relatives, who said to my mother—'It is a pity you do not choose a learned profession for so gifted a youth;' not one of them offered my mother the least assistance."

But Hermann forgot all vexations, and his childhood awoke again within him, as he drew near towards his old home. Yes, there was the river on which, when a boy, he had sailed in the old fisherman's boat which he had stealthily unmoored; yonder the hill where he had found rare snail-shells and fossils. Beside the ravine where he had once dug for treasure, lay the old soft green footpath on which he used to lead his dear sick mother for a walk, and where he had often looked all about him, somewhat ashamed, and anxious to see if any of his comrades were remarking him, and laughing at ~~him~~ for being a mother's darling. And there—

yes there—lay the little old town among its vine-clad hills, and sunned itself by the river.

And then the carriage passed through the old town-gate, the side wings of which could no longer be moved to and fro, for their old pillars only remained, and their grand lanterns were broken long ago; but all the houses seemed small, wonderfully small. There was the town-hall, which Hermann in his boyish days had regarded as a magnificent structure; yonder stood the house of the apothecary, which he had once deemed a dwelling if not exactly suited to a king, at least good enough for a minister of state. How small they all seemed! Everything had diminished since those days. He could not feel that Eugenie was wrong when she said, "Really, Dippelsburg is quite a capital compared to this!"

It was not the first time that Hermann had visited the old town since the days of childhood; but in former years the intervals of absence had been shorter. All the windows flew open as the carriage passed somewhat slowly on up the hilly street, and at length stopped before the house of the cousin, which was one of the handsomest in the neighbourhood. The cousin, dressed in his old snuff-coloured office coat, stepped to the shop-door, and raised his old green morocco leather cap.

"God bless you, Hermann!—your obedient servant, lady cousin," was his sole greeting to Eugenie; but he took snuff frequently, and used his handkerchief repeatedly, to conceal his emotion. Christian, the apprentice—a lanky youth, who stretched

forth his long arms out of a little nankeen jacket—hastened forward to make himself useful, as the visitors alighted; while Herr Eidenbenz, who in his person united the offices of first and second clerk, stood unmoved at the counter, weighing out the pepper which a gaping old woman had asked for. That the cousin's business was a very miscellaneous one was readily seen by a glance at the window. A long herring, hung up by the tail, dangled at the door; in the window were paraded iron tools, glasses filled with rice, coffee, and barley; wax candles, "hurrah cossacks," sticks of sealing-wax, bent crooked by the sun; a few showy red calico neck-kerchiefs; the remains of an antique spotted waistcoat; in short, useful products of art, obtained from all the kingdoms of Nature, lay ranged there in symmetrical order.

As Hermann and Eugenie were conducted through the shop, there came steaming towards them an odour mingled of cheese, snuff, herrings, and stock-fish. Eugenie was indeed glad that no one from her circle or from the upper class of their society at home saw her in this place as a guest. She carefully gathered together the folds of her blue silk dress, so that it might not come in contact with anything, as the cousin, with ceremonious politeness, led her past two stalls screened off from view, and where his own desk and that of Herr Eidenbenz were standing; while the apprentice did his work at a little table in the open room, called the shop-parlour.

"Sit down here," said the cousin; "they are not quite ready for you upstairs," pointing, as he said so, to a very much patched sofa.

"But it is really very pleasant here, uncle," said Eugenie, quite surprised, as she looked out of the window of the little room, and saw that it opened into a green meadow, while poplars and alders were waving enticingly by the bank of a little rivulet which flowed through it.

"Not uncle, only cousin," replied Herr Bürner, somewhat flattered. "Hermann's mother and I were sisters' children."

"Oh, you must let me call you uncle," said Eugenie, who after her little journey was in an amiable mood. "You look so venerable, more like an uncle than a cousin. You must certainly be older than my father, and he will soon be sixty."

"I am seventy-nine," replied the cousin, with the pardonable vanity of hale old age, coquetting with his seventy-nine like a girl of seventeen with her youth.

"Is it possible?" said Eugenie, in unfeigned astonishment, and looking on him with admiration; while the cousin, armed with a long broom, stepped outside, and knocked hard on the ceiling with the said implement, whereat a trap-door opened from above, and a somewhat shrill voice called through the aperture, "Coming directly."

"What was that?" said Eugenie, who, spite of her disgust at the smell of the cheese, had followed him, and seemed highly amused.

"There are two holes here," said the cousin, showing her two square openings in the shop ceiling, which were usually kept covered with a board. "One of these opens into the kitchen, the other into the parlour. I have called Hannebine."

"That is very nice," said Eugenie; "and I dare say you have often talked from the shop, through these, with the deceased aunt?"

"I did not converse with her," he answered.

"Well, but spoken to her?" said Eugenie.

"Not at all," replied the cousin. "We often did not speak throughout the whole day, and yet we were quite good friends. She saw the same things that I did, and I saw the same things that she did; and where was the use of talking?"

It had, indeed, been long since the cousin had spoken so much as this; and Christian, the apprentice, looked across in astonishment, though Herr Eidenbenz had long ago ceased to wonder at anything upon earth. Hannebine now stepped in through a private door in the parlour, bringing a tray on which were placed a gaily-painted chocolate-pot, with a little rosy apple on the top of the lid, cups of the same pattern, and a little sugar-box. Hannebine's name was an economical combination of Johanna and Jacobine. She had long since soared upwards from cook to housekeeper, and she was by no means of a nature so silent as her master's. She conducted herself towards Eugenie, however, with a sort of air of injured dignity. She could hardly forgive her for not having wished to

come to Dietmannsweiler, which she herself considered the very best place out of heaven.

Hermann's hearty greeting to the housekeeper as he introduced his wife, reconciled her in some degree.

"So that is your own wife," she said. "Well, I am sure it is very good of you to come here at all."

Eugenie did not take the remark amiss, and strove with all her might to do justice to the chocolate, which had been made very thick with yolks of eggs.

Hannebine soon withdrew, for she had to-day such work to do as she had not for a long time past had occasion for. For many long years music like this had not been heard in the kitchen. Chopping of meat, pounding in mortars, scraping of graters, whipping of syllabubs, the melting of butter, and the sputtering of fat,

"With nine-voiced song that brought
The muses into mind."

Hannebine was becoming reconciled to the young wife, chiefly because she gave her an opportunity of once more exercising her old art.

"She shall see," she said, "whether we know how to get up a dinner for company in Dietmannsweiler. Wont it do them good after living at that hungry capital, where a farthing roll costs a penny, and where they get the nightmare through eating their meat without sauce. Madeline, baste those ducks! Lizzie, please to beat up those crabs

more thoroughly," said she; for though on ordinary occasions Hannebine took the whole charge herself, with the help of a neighbour's young servant, yet an unusual auxiliary force had been summoned to-day.

Hermann released Eugenie from the chocolate, and led her off into the "uncle's" garden. This was surrounded by a wall, and laid out in four formal square beds, well planted with cabbages and parsnips, carrots and beans, and all imaginable culinary vegetables. There was a border in which larkspurs and asters, besides foxgloves and a few stocks were growing. In the middle of the garden stood a stone summer-house, grave and quiet as the cousin himself—one of those old, mysterious-looking little houses of former times, which may yet be found in gardens and vineyards—houses rarely opened by daylight, but yet where one might sit in the twilight picturing to oneself, in that hour of phantasy, four ghostlike warriors who sat once there at the corners, and hobbled and nobbed with antique painted glasses.

"But," said Eugenie, when she had walked all round the garden, "how ever could you endure this place, where even the garden has such an air of dulness?"

"I assure you," said Hermann, half-offended, "that even this garden once seemed to me a beautiful place. How happy I used to feel when my aunt called me in, in summer, when the gooseberries and apples were ripe. Under that nut-tree

re, in the corner, I used to sit when I was in fourteenth year, reading the 'Nibelungen Lay,' which the vicar had lent me."

Wonders in old-world lays full many and oft we read," murmured he, as these old, happy remembrances came over him.

The old clock on the gate-tower of the town struck twelve, and at the same time there came a full ringing of bells, borne towards them by the wind.

"It seems," said Eugenie, laughing, "as if this somewhat dissonant chorale told

" 'Of doughty high-renowned wights of mickel toil;'

come in, for our uncle spoke of punctual meals, and I have heard such preparation in the kitchen that we must indeed prepare ourselves for mickel toil.'"

Fraulein Hannebine had prepared the best parlour for the guests, though it had never before been used since the death of Frau Bürner. She had taken the covers off the furniture, which now appeared in the glory of its green merino. The only decorations of the beautifully white walls were the large portraits of Herr Bürner and his spouse, who looked fixedly at each other, as if to indemnify themselves for having spoken so little when they were together. Herr Bürner's ledger lay before him, and the lady had her knitting in her hand; while on the background were placed some very models of arts, to intimate her domestic capabilities.

Hannebine had spread on the table a very fine, though somewhat yellow, damask table-cloth, into] which a hunting-scene was artistically woven. Old heavy plate, rare china, with elegant fruits on the covers, adorned the table. Hannebine had kept "Löffler's Cookery-book" on the table in her bed-room from the very first hour in which she heard of the coming visit, so that she might turn over its pages in every leisure moment, and hence this feast of hers exceeded all the dinners that had ever been heard of in Dietmannsweiler.

Eugenie felt every disposition to do due honour to the entertainment, but, before the pudding arrived, she was compelled to strike her colours, and content herself with sitting in amused astonishment watching Hermann. He, whether from a sense of duty, or whether from real appetite, did great things, making his way through pudding, sucking-pig, and meat pasty, at which last Eugenie nibbled a little. Hermann went on even to the splendid final tart with indefatigable perseverance, like the man in the story-book who was obliged to eat his way through a pancake-mountain. He, by this appreciation of the dinner, won back the heart of Hannebine, and she again said to herself with a sigh, "Ah! the poor fellow had better eat his fill; it will have to last him for many a day. She doesn't know good food when she sees it, but looks at it as if it were not dainty enough for her."

Herr Eidenbenz, and even Christian, were allowed ~~to~~ take part in the entertainment; the former re-

mained till the sucking-pig was removed ; but Christian vanished after the vegetables had been served. Neither had spoken a word beyond saying grace at the beginning of the meal.

“Do the gentlemen never talk at all, uncle?” asked Eugenie.

“Christian never speaks ; Herr Eidenbenz speaks at breakfast when he has to order what he may want,” replied the cousin.

“Is he by nature so silent?” asked Eugenie, who had some curiosity, and who wished to study the natural history of the new characters with whom she had become acquainted.

“He talks a good deal at the tavern ; cuts his jokes, indeed, I am told, when he goes there, three evenings in the week, after the shop is closed,” answered the cousin.

Hermann, who sat in continual fear lest some wayward humour of his wife should betray itself, seized upon Herr Bürner as soon as possible, in order to have a private conference with him on a new undertaking which he was contemplating. It was depressing to him to remain always in a position dependent on the will of another, and it had become more painful to him on account of the lamentations which his wife’s relations so continually uttered. He was desirous of beginning business on his own account, trusting that it might prove prosperous, and help to place him finally in a position of independence. *He did not exactly confide to his uncle the fact that another occupation had even now*

become necessary, because his income did not suffice for his expenses. A Frenchman, a Mons. Gablon, had established himself at the capital, where he had raised a large business, in which he had offered Hermann a partnership. The business comprised a number of articles which had never hitherto formed part of a wholesale trade; and among other things were hares' feet and capons' tails; but on this very account Mons. Gablon expected great results, and the first estimates which Hermann now proceeded to lay before his cousin seemed very favourable.

Much as Eugenie desired an independent position for her husband, yet all details of business were wearisome and repugnant to her. The liberal entertainment, the formal pictures of the wedded pair with their steadfast gaze, excited a soporific power over her, and after struggling against it for a long time, she fell asleep, and was awaked from her sweet dreams by the exclamation of Hermann, who said—

“Come, Eugenie dear, had we not better go and look over the house? I want to show you my mother's little room.”

Glad to be aroused, Eugenie woke up just in time to hear the cousin's last words.

“So you know precisely where you are; I can neither give a loan nor promise you any security in a business of which I have no opinion—not a farthing, depend upon it.”

Hermann gulped down the bitter feeling which

was rising, and led Eugenie away round the large, and for the most part unoccupied, rooms of the house, up to the neat little attic where his mother dwelt after her husband's death, rent-free. A poor widow and her daughter now lived in it. The deceased husband, a cornet-player, having been a friend of Herr Bürner's, who in his hours of leisure played the bassoon, rather for his own exhilaration than that of his neighbours, this widow also lived in these rooms without payment of rent, though Herr Bürner, for the sake of regularity, paid the rent every quarter-day from the private cash-box; the outlay from which stood in his ledger under the heading "Paid into God's treasury."

There was the little room, and there too was all the old furniture of that dear mother, which the cousin had bought at her death, and left in its place. The easy-chair with the black morocco cover rubbed off a good deal in the spot where the mother's head had leaned; the table with its inlaid work and turned feet; and the footstool which ran on wheels: the precious cabinet, which once contained all her small store of plate, and her little articles of jewellery, with the gifts which Hermann had received from his god-parents, and a miniature likeness of his deceased father set in a ring. That spacious cabinet which used to seem to him a fountain of hidden wealth; the little cupboard from which his mother had been wont to bring out his evening meal, and which he had

on one occasion pulled right down on his bed when on recovering from the scarlet fever he tried to open it, and was thus nearly killed—he could have sat down and wept like a child.

Eugenie well understood the feeling of her husband, and conversed kindly with the widow of the cornet-player, in order that he might be quiet and unobserved. This inspection of the house, a walk by the river-side, and the meal of Hannebine's delicious coffee, pretty well occupied the afternoon, so that they could not get back to the capital on the same day. The evening, however, seemed quite interminable, till at length the solemn supper was over, and Eugenie was able to bury herself in the state-bed, with its large-flowered chintz coverlet. It had seemed such a very long evening, though even Herr Eidenbenz had, contrary to his usual taciturnity, made the one observation, "that it had been quite fine all day, but one could not tell what it might be to-morrow."

Hermann was in secret much cast down by the cousin's disapproval of his new project, from which, even if he had wished it, he could not now in honour draw back. He was silent, and he slept little that night, though he now occupied the company-room in the very house in which he had formerly played the humble part now borne by Christian. After several courses at breakfast, and meat luncheons next day, they prepared to depart. The cousin's heart was deeply moved at the *leave-taking*, and his love and emotion displayed them-

selves by two considerable packets of money, one of which he thrust into Hermann's pocket, saying, as if in jest—

“There, there's some money that your wife knows nothing about;” and giving the other to Eugenie with the remark, “There, lady-cousin, that's for ribands and sundries.” A magnificent sugar-loaf and a large bag of coffee completed the gift.

Hannebine had become almost reconciled to the young wife, by her beauty and kindness, as well as by means of a splendid cap ribbon, which by Hermann's advice Eugenie had brought with her as a present. Christian silently helped to place the luggage on the carriage, and Herr Eidenbenz stood in silence too at the shop door, till he opened his mouth to say, “A pleasant journey to you.” Old Herr Bürner took snuff often and sneezed very much, just as they were driving away; and then he went back to his retreat, saying, “Well, well, good will come out of it some day.”

“But now, only think,” said Eugenie, as they left the little town behind them, “what an existence such a life as this must be—dragging on day by day, amongst cheese and stock-fish, and for your only recreation paying a visit to the stone house in the garden, and on high days and holidays gazing at the wooden portraits of Herr Bürner and his wife: how ever could it be endured, and yet you vegetated for four years in all this dreariness!”

“*Really, this vegetating was not so dreadful,*” said Hermann, half-vexed, for other chords had

been touched by this visit to the home of his childhood. "I was not quite like the dumb Christian, and had more inward joy than you imagine. You don't know how happy I was over my grammar lessons which I was permitted to take at the deacon's, or in the evenings which I spent with my dear mother, or in the books which I read by stealth behind the counter. Then there were my botanical rambles early in the day before the shop was opened. Even my day-dreams were delightful, though they were among the casks and bales of goods, for they bore me far away to the lands where spices grow and citrons bloom. Oh ! youth needs no coloured pictures—it colours them itself."

"That may be," admitted Eugenie ; "for with a good stock of youthful poesy in one's nature such a life might be endured!"—and ah ! Eugenie little knew of how much of the stock of youthful poetry the world's breath had already despoiled her—"but in and for itself," she continued, "it is really a horrid existence ! No, our present life may have its inconveniences, but when I think of the lot of a wife placed here—for even women must take their part amongst vinegar and oil, herrings and stock-fish, must they not?—no, I had rather die!"

"But then," said Hermann, "think of the certain, almost invariable profits arising out of such a business—the just proportion between the receipts and the expenditure !"

"That, certainly, is worth something," said

Eugenie, with her eyes full of tears ; “ but I never expected to have a shop, and I should prefer the simplest dwelling in the capital, with its incessant difficulties about indispensables ; and then, again, that matter will surely improve if your new undertaking prospers—only do not let money-getting absorb you, for the Berlin proverb is not without truth—

“ Where pelf begins politeness ends.”

Even the slight touching of this fatal spring had jarred the newly-awakened harmony of the married pair. Hermann brooded in silence over the thought of how far these indispensables were really indispensable. Eugenie recalled to mind her youthful dreams of an ever-watchful, ever-attentive, ever-assiduous love, all fragrance and poetry.

“ Circumstances are against us,” she said to herself, with a sigh ; “ my aunt at the Presidency was not wrong, ‘ Position is not such a matter of indifference as young people fancy.’ ” Eugenie might have added, too, the remark of the ox-drover, who said—“ Position is not immaterial,” when his daughter told him she wished to marry a cow-driver.

And so the young couple returned to their pretty house in Prince’s Street, where a series of visitors’ cards lay awaiting them. They came back without that precious gain which every journey *should bring with it*—the fresh delight of being *once more in the old home*. The impression of

the past remained the same, and Eugenie said to herself again and again with a sigh, "No ! never such a life in such a place !"

DEEPER SHADOWS.

Two years had passed by since the visit to Dietmannsweiler. Much happiness and joy may be comprised in the space of two years, and the time is long enough also for much care, anxiety, and vexation, and it had brought more of the latter than the former to the young pair. Eugenie had not moral courage enough to withdraw from the slavery of society which, on account of the various circles in which she mixed, was doubly fatiguing. She could not get rid of the worry of always thinking to whom she now owed an invitation, and who owed one to her, and how she should suitably arrange her visits : in which cases she should invite the wife only and where husband and wife should be invited together. Then came all sorts of vexations ; invitations in which she was passed over ; parties where she felt herself slighted : it is a wearisome and thankless service, this service of the world !

All Eugenie's girlish pursuits, her books, her quiet rambles, all were given up ; she had no longer either time or inclination for them. She certainly practised her music now and then, be-

cause of its use in society ; but she might have sung with Goethe's shepherd—

“ Here then to this have I come down,
And myself yet know I not how.”

But is this down-coming a necessary consequence of life in and with society, so that it is the inevitable condition of any man who does not wholly isolate himself? How many there must be who join in these calls and evening parties, though not, perhaps, in three different circles—yet who do not altogether lose their happiness, or their love of home. Yes, there are some many-sided, strong natures who can easily give themselves up in a measure to these social requirements; who suffer them to claim only a portion of their being, and who may still keep the best portion for themselves and for those dear to them. And there are cheerful, sunny spirits who can find everywhere some source of innocent joy; everywhere make opportunities to say or do kind things to others; who can discover flowers even in the dusty highway. There are quiet, reserved natures who pass through the crowds of life untouched; and there are beings so wholly superficial that they have at no time anything better than the small coins which they give out in their daily intercourse, and who could therefore give nothing better in their own home, even should they never leave it. And lastly, there are high, transparent characters, who bring their own pure atmosphere into every circle; who, without act or intention,

waken in other hearts the nobler and higher tones which exist in their own; who attune the surrounding company to themselves, and not themselves to their company.

All these stand in little danger of losing their best qualities in society. But be the character what it may, a man must have found a firm centre for heart and life before he can give himself without risk to the outer world, whether it be to its trouble and toil, or to its pleasure and profit. Eugenie had within her something of that which helps to bear one safely through the whirlpool of life—a warm, sincere heart; a deep yearning for a cordial, faithful love; a cheerful and benevolent spirit; but she lacked the centre: she had not taken a firm root in her new duties and relationship before she was drawn into the whirlpool; she had not secured to herself the one precious pearl, and she now threw away her substance on trifles.

And Hermann, her lord, her head and guide. Oh! he had always meant to act for the best; he had pictured a domestic life so utterly different from theirs; he had been ready to make any sacrifice, and had been from the beginning rather the sufferer than the gainer by these social pleasures. But he had yielded too easily, too passively, to this state of things. If he had only earnestly uttered a few words; if he had only said "Are these invitations never to come to an end?" or, "Dearest, you do not seem at all to belong to me,"

it would have ceased. It is true that the wife is the appointed guardian of the holy flame of the domestic hearth; yet there are many cases in which the husband, her shield and guard, has to screen her against the dangers which are gliding in gay attire noiselessly around her—even from herself. And the weapon which is mighty for this purpose is certainly not ill-humour, not grumbling and unkind hints; it is love! “Ye husbands, love your wives,” is a charge which was not given as an express command without having its deep significance. A wife may withstand a husband’s admonitions; she may become accustomed to his ill-temper, and learn to bear his anger and chiding; but his earnest and passionate love, a love which reveals itself in word and deed, and patient forbearance; this a woman’s heart can rarely withstand. Yet such a love as this, a love which not only “passeth all things, and beareth all things, but overcometh all things,” this is drawn only from a source, from a fountain whose waters are ever springing. “Come ye, every one who is thirsty, and whosoever will let him drink thereof.” Hermann had listened to the rushing of these waters, but he had not drunk of them; and then his own heart had not taught him the all-conquering patience and endurance of a love which never wearies. With a sincere desire to please his young wife, he had let her take her own way, and when displeased and out of humour *because nothing in his house was going on according to his wishes*, he had returned to his bachelor

habits; and so they lived on together, lived happily as people would have said, for they lived without much strife or dispute, though indeed without true, deep love, and without real happiness. The young man had heard the rushing of the waters from afar, and the thirst of those who have once heard them can never more be quenched at broken cisterns.

An occasional visit to her old home always did Eugenie good. The fresh breezes of the woodland came wafting towards her the dear old thoughts of her girlhood, the sweet breathings of her early affection. Hermann's visits at these times could be but short, yet Eugenie looked for them with longing desire, would walk on the way to meet him, and wander with him through the old paths up to the ruined castle. Then when they sat on the stone bench, where in those past times they had sat together, the thought often came over Hermann's mind, that his dear one had now again in thoughtless gaiety climbed too high, and reached a place of danger, and he must carry her down again by the might of his strong arm. But he did not well know how to attempt it. Every word with which he strove to approach the subject called forth nothing but excuses from Eugenie—excuses which might easily grow into recriminations, and this would make matters worse. There was one point, above all, on which he could not bear to be touched, and Eugenie had not at all times sufficient delicacy to avoid an allusion to it. This

was his position—his good and honest position and calling—which, after all, was sure to bear the blame of all that went wrong, and this he ever felt to be a vexatious subject; and so all his thoughts on these matters remained unspoken, and the short day spent in the cloister seemed but as the green oasis in the desert. And even these days were not quite the unsoiled green spot: those little demons, “the claims of society,” found their way into the quiet cloister vale and the lonely green-wood.

“The High Bailiff’s wife will never forgive me,” said the mother, “if I do not take you to call there; and we have lately become very intimate, too, with the chief officer of the Revenue here, and with the Doctor, and I have promised to make one call there while you are with us; and do you know that Herr Von Plümer has now been appointed the District Forester in Southberg, and has married a young lady from Steigentasch?”

“We will wait for that call till my husband comes,” said Eugenie, decidedly.

And so again there were making visits and returning visits, and calls are quite as tedious in the country as in town; and the hours for quiet woodland rambles were always hard to find.

The visit to Herr Von Plümer was paid. His wife certainly looked very grand. If she was not handsome herself, her toilette undoubtedly was so; yet it in truth rather veiled than beautified her thin face and meagre figure, and scarcely pro-

duced the "effect" of which Herr Von Plümer always thought so much.

Hermann and Eugenie were quite a different pair from this, even though their freshness of bloom had suffered a little from the atmosphere of city life. Herr Von Plümer seemed to have some idea of this, and therefore represented the finest *tableau* of matrimonial tenderness before his guests, so that his wife was quite astonished by his affectionate manner. It must, he thought, have a good effect, when he leant down to kiss her brow, and to play with her curls; though that was somewhat dangerous, as they happened to originate more from the artistic human hand than the liberal gift of Nature; while he whispered in her ear, "Send for some wine from the inn—ours is so acid."

Eugenie, too, was almost unconsciously led to make others think that her lot was a happy one, and she drew nearer to her husband than she was accustomed to do before others, and could not refrain from bringing occasionally into her conversation some remarks of her distinguished acquaintances. All this so annoyed Hermann that he did not on his part by any means play the amiable married man, and Eugenie thus appeared less like a happy wife than the generous sufferer, gentle, yielding, and smiling amidst her tears; and this amiable gentleness had certainly never been in her girlhood the marked feature of her character. That in all this there was more of acting than of truth—in her conduct she did not know; and she first

became aware of it by a secret uncomfortable feeling which stole over her while she walked home in silence by the side of Hermann.

And thus there was a discordant element even in the peacefulness of country life. The mother felt that all was not as it should be, but the real cause of dissatisfaction was not evident to her, and when she laboured to improve the outworks her attempts were not well received.

"Don't you think, my dear, that your husband is too fond of society," she inquired anxiously. "Had you not better give up a part of it, that is, if it does not cost you too great a sacrifice?"

"I give up! a sacrifice! do you really think then, mother, that my heart is set on such things? you do not know how little I seek them; and as to Hermann, you were never more mistaken, for he is wholly indifferent to how much or how little of society I have; he keeps quite close to business and his new undertaking, so that I should scarcely ever have any of his company, even if I never went over the threshold of our home."

"Well, of course you cannot disoblige people," said the mother, appeasingly; "the connexions of people of distinction may some day prove useful. I always think that if Hermann could get a situation in the government bank, he would then be a public officer."

This was, and ever remained mamma's fixed idea. Another time she would say to herself, with

"If only they had children, all might be well ! but, ah dear me ! there are some cold, discontented married people where there are children, and then a wife thinks to herself, 'How much trouble a family gives one ; now, a wife who has no children has so much more opportunity of devoting herself entirely to her husband.'"

Eugenie was partly right in what she had said, for since Hermann had commenced business on his own account there was a restlessness and an absent air about him that allowed him little care or leisure for conversation with his wife. Every moment that he could spare from his regular business he worked at the counting-house with Gablon, sitting up over the accounts often far into the night ; and then he would go with his partner to an hotel, so as not to disturb Eugenie. Gablon also had often to make journeys, and then Herr Walter had double work at home. He frequently came in irritable and out of humour, and if his wife returned from a late party, would receive her in ill-temper.

Eugenie seldom gave her husband a hasty answer, but she had a deep feeling that it was very unjust in him to vent the vexations caused by business on her unoffending head ; so she answered him shortly and dryly, or sheltered herself behind the silence of injured dignity. She would say in her heart that she was not bound to flatter him with fine words when he did wrong. Had she
often that love's duty stands higher than any

other earthly obligation ? that it is but the service of a slave to give faithful work for the sake only of good wages ; gentle words and tender care, only for the sake of kind words and tenderness in return. But it is an angel's service when we stand by ever-loving, fostering, caring for, and helping, even though we can hope for no reward.

So Eugenie went into society, and Hermann went to his business, each with secret bitterness at heart,—a labour without joy or thanks, and a pursuit of pleasure without enjoyment. They had no longer much to tell or to ask during the few hours in which they were together. It had become almost with them as it had been with Cousin Bürner and his wife, though in that case there had been perhaps, amid all the silence, a more cordial understanding between them. They themselves wondered how it came to this. There had been no storm, nothing but a dull, heavy atmosphere.

A glad hope, however, came like a fresh breeze to dispel much of the vapour and mist. So indeed the mother trusted when she informed Hermann that Eugenie required much care and indulgence. Hermann was certainly greatly rejoiced, and was affectionately attentive to his wife ; yet his mother-in-law was grieved to see that the old dark cloud soon overspread his features again. Still this good news brought better times, and while he was careful and tender towards Eugenie, she, on her part, became kind and loving, for her mind was wavering

between joyous hopes and that fear of death which most young mothers feel. She had too much of a true-hearted woman's self-respect to give way, on the plea of her approaching trials, to all intolerable whims and humours, as some women do ; and all her involuntary restlessness Hermann bore calmly and patiently. But the clouds would not yield, and they pressed heavily and more heavily on Eugenie's head now that she had learnt again to watch her husband's looks and expressions with the eyes of affection.

"Never mind, it is only some matters of business," said he, checking her kindly questioning ; but on one occasion, when much urged, he said, "I cannot conceal from you any longer that the principal of the bank has discharged me ; he thinks that my own affairs make so many demands on my time that his cannot be properly attended to."

"Well, after all, that will be better," said Eugenie, trying to console him. "You will now have more time to devote to your own business, and if that prospers all will be right."

"Yes," replied Hermann, in a depressed tone, "if it does."

But there came soon a joyful day, which dawned after a somewhat sorrowful night, and there lay the little wonder, with his tiny red head on the white pillow, so touching in his helplessness, without any expression of mind, or love, or life, in that soft unformed face, and yet so sweet and precious in the mother's eyes, and himself so richly endowed from

heaven with that treasure of love which a babe receives long ere he can respond to it. Ah ! it is well that women are not allowed to sit in judgment when a murderer of a child is to be sentenced. No woman who had ever held her own babe in her arms would be inclined to a merciful judgment.

"And a little boy, too !" said the nurse, with special emphasis, for Eugenie's mother was not there to tell her, being detained at home by an illness of the father. There had been a time when Eugenie's pride as a woman would have revolted against the extraordinary jubilee with which so small a lord of the creation is welcomed into the world ; but now her heart gladly assented, for it is always thus, and both father and mother are the more glad and proud when their first child is a boy.

"And a very pretty little boy, too," said Eugenie ; "the very image of his papa."

Now, Hermann did not quite think so when he held the small creature in his arms, with the little eyes fast closed ; and Eugenie, who had read, both in prose and poetry, so many beautiful things concerning a father's transports by the cradle of his first-born, felt rather disappointed that this transport expressed itself so quietly.

Hermann gently laid the babe back in the cradle, took his wife's hand affectionately, and kissed her fondly on the brow, saying—

"Pray, do take care of yourself," and bending *once more over the cradle*, he said with hearty emotion, "God bless thee, little one," and left the

room; and yet even now the cloud had not quite passed from his brow.

"The master is very anxious that every care should be taken of you; and how gently he comes in," said the nurse, who perhaps guessed the young wife's slight disappointment. "You should hear Chief Justice Zettler. Why, I have heard him rail like a dragon at his lady after her confinement, and everything ought to be kept so quiet in a room of this kind—that's what I always say—and so I never would let Frau Schniezerin stay long in any room that I had charge of. Such people, you know, can't be quiet, and it tries the head of a lying-in woman—for the head, you know, quiet is everything; only quiet and rest—though our little boy there is certainly too quiet for me;" and then she went to state the importance of this same rest and quiet, with like monosyllables, to the maid outside the door.

During two days nurse busied herself all day long about the little being whom Eugenie scarcely let out of her arms; while she, during these two long days, was occupied in contemplation of the little face, listening to the dear breathings, and striving to ascertain the exact colour of the rarely opened eyes. On the third morning Hermann stepped as usual into the room. It was all so still there. Nurse, who had sat up late, was now asleep. Eugenie held the baby in her arms, and was looking sadly at him. "He is so quiet," she said, "listen! he scarcely breathes."

Hermann carried the babe gently to the window; he listened for the breathing—it stood still; the little face was cold—the baby was dead. The surgeon was called immediately, but no endeavours could arouse the infant. It had died of croup, he said, and nothing could have been done for it. He gently laid the babe in the cradle which it had occupied for so short a time, and went out, murmuring to himself, “Ah, I know some houses in which it would be a blessing if the babe were to die!”

Eugenie’s mother had torn herself from her home duties to come to her daughter; and she persisted in herself preparing the little babe for its coffin. It lay among flowers, and looked like the statue of an angel. It seemed as if some spark of the slumbering spirit yet looked out of the quiet features of the dead; an impress of heaven seemed to lie on that pale little brow; and the father felt, as he gazed with deep grief for the last time on his babe, that nothing in which the Lord had ever breathed a living soul was born only to die, whether it faded while yet in bud or in blossom, or lived to become the matured fruit.

It was a hard struggle that was fought out in this silent room, which Eugenie’s mother could now keep quiet without difficulty.

Ah! Eugenie was not willing to resign the child in whom she had now bound up all her hopes of a *new life and a fresh happiness—with whom she had, in her thoughts and day-dreams, already lived*

a life of long and happy years. She had pictured the child to herself as the bright boy whose merry laugh gladdened heart and home; as the gifted youth destined to bring joy and honour to his father's house. No; she thought she could not, would not resign her child; and it seemed to her as if hers was a cruel fate, to have so much hope and joy just placed before her eyes, only that she should have the anguish of losing it.

All was still, indeed, in this desolate chamber. A soft spring breeze came pouring in through the open window of the adjoining room, and like the breath of a holier spring, came too the Divine influence upon the spirit of the young mother, wafting to her those words of the Bible which the pastor had recently read, when, at Hermann's request, he had come to visit her. Might not her infant, then, be a messenger from heaven, sent by the Lord to draw her heart towards that home to which her dear treasure was so early transferred. Were all her hopes, and love, and sorrow, and tears in vain? or were they not rather a pledge to her of her right in that which she had so soon been forced to relinquish?

It was at early morning, amidst the singing of birds and the scent of flowers, that the carriage drove away bearing the little garlanded coffin. Hermann and the nurse only accompanied it, for Eugenie's mother, overcome by the journey which ~~she had been so suddenly summoned to make, and~~ ~~she had been so suddenly summoned to make, and~~ had fallen upon her child,

had at Eugenie's request lain down to rest on the sofa by her bedside. It all seemed so still—the stillness of death—in that room where the cradle stood empty! But amidst the stillness God's voice was heard now speaking to the wounded heart; the voice which said, "My thoughts towards thee are of peace, and not of evil." It was the voice of Him who had said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

Hermann came back from the funeral, and bending over the bed of his wife, he wept like a child. She gazed at him more affectionately than she had done for a long time, and said, softly, "I have seen the Lord, and my soul is satisfied." The nurse brought the wreath of flowers which had lain on the little coffin, and hung it up in the room. At first Eugenie wished to keep the cradle there, but it made her so sad that she soon consented to their taking it away. And now came very quiet days, such as she had not known for years. They would have been good days, even with all the shadows that lay upon them, if Hermann's looks had not day by day grown gloomier, and still more troubled.

By degrees, as Eugenie was able to sit an hour on the sofa, her acquaintances came to see her. These were not a great many, for the larger number had no time, and yet they were too many. They expressed much sympathy, and with a few this came from the heart. Others had their own way of *consoling her*.

"It is really grievous, Frau Walter," said one;

"especially as it was a boy. But it is of no use lamenting; and you must take care you do not injure yourself by too much fretting."

"You will find," said another, consolingly, "that you will recover much quicker than if there were a baby to attend to, and you will not lose your night's rest."

"And I have gone through the same thing myself more than once," said Frau Stein. "It distressed me, of course; but whatever would become of all the children that are born, if every one of them lived? As I often say to my older children, those that are gone give the least trouble. One only has to go once a year and have the sods of their little graves attended to, and perhaps not even that. But of course it takes time to be able to feel like this."

Eugenie might have said with Job—"Miserable comforters are ye all," but she was not inclined to dispute with them, for her heart had become so calm during the last few weeks. She had a dread of again returning to the world, and gladly acceded to her mother's proposal, which Hermann willingly seconded—that she should accompany her to Altenhausen, that she might regain her strength in the quiet valley.

Hermann, up to the very time of Eugenie's departure, remained silent and absent; but when bidding her farewell, he drew her towards him with more passionate emotion than she had scarcely ever seen in him, and said "Adieu," as if

ere parting with her for ever. "You will come, and see Eugenie, will you not?" her mother from the carriage-window. nie's heart was too heavy for utterance. passed the churchyard. She recognised the grave by the young fir-tree which her father sent thither from the wood at Altenhausen. thought to herself as she looked at it, "This be my babe's Christmas tree," and gently ng her hand towards it, she covered her face, they drove on.

ugenie sat once more in her old home, looking of the old favourite window of her girlhood, letting bygone days glide past her. She ght of times long ago, and seemed to live over again. And she so young, too! Not ive-and-twenty! She thought of her joyous g dreams, and of all the wonderful happiness h she had imagined to herself. She thought or first meeting with Hermann, and of all the d of love and hope that had mingled with meeting, and of the discord which had stolen her happiness. The discord was at present ced in the blessed harmony which now filled loving heart, but was it silenced for ever? scarcely dared to think farther on this matter, she did not care to linger in thought on the which had passed; while the future lay dim shapeless before her. She was resolved that ould be different from what the past had but how?—that she knew not. She called

to mind, almost with aversion, their former mode of life ; yet she could not rejoice in the secluded life which she now contemplated—it was all dim and dreary. Her love to her husband was not dead, but she was like a branch from which all the shoots had been cut off, and on which there have as yet grown no new ones. She was just now getting very anxious, too, because she had received no tidings from Hermann. He had been over to see her, and once afterwards had written—once only, and briefly and hastily. He had inquired tenderly after her health, and had promised a visit speedily: this visit she was now daily looking for. Ah ! not with the happy feeling of a bride, much as she would have wished so to feel ; and yet notwithstanding all the comfort and affection which she received from her parents, she would rather have leaned her wearied head on his breast and have wept, she scarcely knew why, for she did not weep for her child only.

But she soon heard footsteps on the stairs, and her mother came, bringing all sorts of refreshments such as mothers only know how to prepare, while on the tray beside them lay a letter from Hermann. Eugenie did not know exactly why it was that this time she so much wished to read the letter when alone, and felt glad that her mother was called away immediately. She was right. There was much in the letter which it was better for her to read and think over in silence.

For the first time Hermann now spoke to her

frankly and in detail, of his business ; the undertaking on which he had set so many hopes. The sad result of all his explanations was, that everything had failed, that his partner, Gablon, had partly deceived him and was himself partly deceived, and finally that he had absconded, taking with him the little he could save from the wreck of the business.

“ I knew much of this,” Hermann added, “ while you were here, but could not find courage to tell you, and hoped from day to day that I might yet discover something that would open a way of escape from my desperate position. I discovered nothing, but I made a resolution that was equally desperate. I am too deeply involved in debt to have any hope of payment. My word and my honour are pledged, and there is no possibility, even with my utmost exertions, of my ever being able to gain anything approaching to what is needful for fulfilling my obligations. Spirits, hope and honour lost, there was no more to lose but life. I will be frank, Eugenie ; it was not the thought of you that prevented the execution of my design—of the dark resolve which I so long bore about with me. I thought that my death would not make you so unhappy as my life must do. I thought but little of the sin of thus throwing away a life which had become so miserable by no fault of my own. I was at war with heaven as with life, and with myself, and I asked why I had been made so *unhappy* ? I had worked hard, I had wished to *live honestly*, and to be just and benevolent, if I

had only been prosperous and happy. It was the death of our child, Eugenie, and the angelic peace in that pale little face which brought me again to believe in a state of blessedness, which made me dread the sin that must for ever exclude me from the pure world to which this angel belonged. And yet the demon awaked again. I had not courage to drag through life without honour or hope; the farewell which I said to you at parting I thought was a farewell for ever. Last night, Eugenie, I went out to buy a pistol. On my way past the post-office our old postman hurried after me, saying, 'It is fortunate, Herr Walter, that I saw you pass, for here is a letter which is to be delivered immediately.'

"I took my letter and read it by the street lamp. God is merciful, Eugenie. He willeth not the death of sinners, but that they shall be converted and live. Cousin Bürner of Dietmannsweiler is dead, and has left me his business and the whole of his property, with some small deductions, on the unalterable condition that I undertake to carry on the business in my own proper person. I should never again during his lifetime have ventured to ask his assistance, for he had spoken out so decidedly against my plans. He will not be angry with me now because I cannot help feeling that his death has proved so marvellous a relief, nay even a preservation from eternal death.

"And now, dear Eugenie, I must first tell you that ~~nothing~~ anything can be done till I have entered upon my

cousin's shop at Dietmannsweiler to cut cheese and weigh out tobacco. I know too well your horror of this kind of life to request or to compel you to share it with me, especially as at first it will be necessary for me greatly to diminish my expenses. Remain then, meanwhile, in the pleasant peaceful home which you have with your parents. God knows my heart, and knows that it is not according to my will, though it may have been my fault, that I cannot prepare a home like it for you. As I very well know the business, and its certain and regular profits, I hope in time not only to pay all my debts, but even to acquire so much that I may afterwards, in the course of a few years, relinquish the business to some distant relations of Bürner's wife, to whom it comes if I do not retain it. And then I hope, if God shall enable me, with riper experience and more prudence, to establish a house such as I may beg you to share with me. As soon as I have set business matters a little in order, I shall come and see you, my dear Eugenie. Thank God, with me, that He has preserved us both from endless misery; and forgive me, if you can, that I have not been able to make you happier and to retain your love."

Eugenie sat for a long while with her letter in her hand. She communed long alone with her God and with her own heart before she gave it to her mother, and begged her to communicate its contents to her *father*, whose aversion to long conferences she well knew.

It was not till supper-time that she met her parents together ; both looked excited and very grave.

"We have talked it all over, dear Eugenie," said her mother. "We will be silent at present on the calamity from which the dear good God has graciously delivered us ; indeed, no good would come of reproaching your husband for not having better repaid our confidence, and for staking your future happiness in so unjustifiable a manner. All things now seem in a way to come right. Hermann's proposal for you to remain with us I think most sensible ; and your father at length admits that you will be right in doing so. For it is not to be thought of now, especially in your weak state of health, that you should be placed in such miserable and scanty circumstances. We will behave handsomely to your husband. I have, by your father's wish, at once written to him to say that he can keep the whole of your dowry, so that it will not seem like a separation, and with us you will need nothing. Stay here ; I will make you as happy as I can, poor child ! and if you should ever come together again, God in His goodness will help you."

The father remained silent during this effusion of her mother.

"Forgive me, mother," said Eugenie, calmly, "if I see it in a different light, and go hence to my husband, where my proper place certainly is ; to

him whom I have promised to love 'in joy and in sorrow, and never to forsake.'"

"Ah! there comes the overstrained romance of your character," said her mother, with a sigh. "You do not know yourself, dear child. You undertake everything in a state of excited feeling; but you cannot go through with it. Think of this life as you have yourself seen it; think how it is to be passed, day by day, in a greasy shop, among oil and vinegar-casks—among cheese and stock-fish. In a little while you would be worn to death with it, and would only make your husband unhappy instead of helping him. Much better stay here, in peace and love. Then when Hermann comes here to see you, you will always be something new to each other. If he is really anxious for your society he will strive doubly after a suitable position for you, and your father will then, in due time, help you as far as he possibly can. And you need not be afraid of people circulating reports about you, for we will live as quietly as you wish. And, who knows? perhaps your father can make some pleasant exchange with another officer, and go to some other district, which certainly would be better."

"You are right in many respects, mother," answered Eugenie, in a calm, decided tone. "I am weak and spoilt, and much sorrow would have been spared to all if I had from the very beginning better *understood* how to fulfil the duties of my position."

But I will repair what I can. I am not looking forward to a life full of pleasantness, enjoyment, and delight. Oh no! to a life of sacrifice and denial; but it must be a life of duty—a life," she added, bursting into tears, "a life that leads me yonder to where my baby is."

"And you are right," said her father, rising from his chair and standing erect; "you are quite right, my child," he added, in a loud voice. "I did not choose to speak of it. I would never have driven my daughter from her parents' roof; but it gladdens my heart to think that you have, of yourself, discovered that you ought to go."

"But," said the mother, piteously, "if people ask after my married daughter, I shall have to say that she keeps a shop at Dietmannsweiler."

"You would only have to say, then," said the mother, "that my daughter is a well-principled, good wife, who knows her duty, and would do it, even if she had to sell matches."

"Matches she will certainly have to sell in that shop at Dietmannsweiler," said the mother, and she sighed so dolefully that it even brought a smile to Eugenie's lips.

"I say again, my daughter, once for all, you are right; a pleasure it will not be; but it is your duty, and those who do that are not left in the lurch by our good God."

AND NOW TO THE GOAL.

Hermann Walter had established himself in his old home, which was now to be his new home. It did not seem to him at all like what it once was. He had grown out of this small way of business long ago ; its narrow limits oppressed him. He felt, too, so utterly alone, and had no inclination to form any new connexions. The taciturnity of Herr Eidenbenz, in his business relations, seemed really a comfort to him, for he disliked conversation of any kind. Christian's term of apprenticeship had expired, so at present the two were left alone.

Hermann threw himself with great energy into the business ; it was the one only thing he cared to do. But as he stood there, behind the screen which had belonged to his old cousin, and before his desk, the once blue-varnished top of which was covered with ink-spots and figures, or sat in front of it upon the old leather stool, which screwed up and down, he could hardly help thinking sometimes that he had been bewitched, and need only to put on the green cap to be the very identical cousin himself.

The business was very prosperous, and Herr Walter was in the eyes of the good folks of Dietmannsweiler a truly enviable mortal. Yet he was not happy. He could not say that Eugenie was *altogether to blame* in the horror which she had felt *for this shop* of his cousin. The rooms upstairs

had now, indeed, been made neat and elegant. Fraulein Hannebine had, with real pride, unpacked and arranged all Hermann's beautiful furniture, though the splendours of old times had on this account to be turned into a back room. She, too, quite understood what was handsome and fashionable.

"And when does the lady come?" Hannebine would often ask of Hermann. "Shall we not prepare some garlands to deck the rooms for her welcome?"

"My wife is staying with her parents for the recovery of her health," he always answered, "and it is yet undecided when she will come."

But Hannebine became more and more strengthened in the terrible suspicion that the home in Dietmannsweiler was not grand enough for his wife, and the dislike, which had scarcely been subdued, was aroused anew.

It was a cloudy evening, with intervals of heavy rain, and Hermann was standing, gloomy as the weather, at his shop-door, during a moment of leisure. It was an evening on which Herr Eidenbenz had gone earlier than usual to his tavern, so he had all the work of the shop to himself, and this in the evening was often very troublesome. He had up to this time avoided connecting himself with any club at Dietmannsweiler, though Herr Eidenbenz had recommended to him those at the Lion, the Eagle, and the Angel, as almost equally worthy. His thoughts went back to his boy-

hood, when he had played on these stone steps; on his later youth, and his years spent in travelling. His reflections were something like those of the gay bachelor in the song—

“How oft I dream a loving wife
Soft round my heart has clung;
While I, sweet pastime of my life,
Our darling’s cradle swung.”

It seemed to him but a dream that he really had a wife in another part of the world; a wife whom he had wooed with love and longing; whom he had taken to his home in joy and pride, and who had now left him alone in his adversity—well, not exactly in adversity, but in a grocery shop.

“Half a pound of olive-oil,” said a girl who had just come in.

“That there is father’s snuff-box, and he wants it filled, please,” said a little boy, interrupting him in the midst of his reflections.

Just as Hermann went in to satisfy these demands, a light carriage drove up to the door. Who could it be? A lady stepped out.

“Eugenie!” exclaimed Hermann, in extreme surprise; and running down the stone steps, he clasped her in his arms and kissed her, in entire forgetfulness of people who had gathered around. “Eugenie, it is you! And you are really come!” and he looked at her again and again, till, becoming quite embarrassed, the wife walked quickly *into the shop*. But the shop, alas! was no place for *the reunited pair*.

"I'm in a hurry for my oil," said the young girl. "And my snuff, please," cried out the boy. "Two ounces of coffee, and a pound of sugar, for my missus has company," said a little errand girl. "A ha'porth of shoe-nails, please," said a shoemaker's boy who had just come in. "Must I go and buy my paper at the bookseller's?" snappishly inquired a young city damsel.

"Directly—I will attend to you all directly," cried the happy and amazed master of the shop; and knocking loudly on the ceiling to summon Hannebine, he ran about from oil to coffee, from coffee to snuff, from snuff to paper, while new customers thronged into the shop as if all Dietmannsweiler had sworn on this one evening to make him rich and mad.

Hannebine, who knew how to serve in the shop, hastened to his help. Having been occupied in the cellar, she had not heard the sound of the carriage; and behold, there stood on one side of the counter her master overfull of business, and on the other a slim lady in hat and shawl, and looking very pale, counting out some shoe-nails for the startled shoemaker's boy, who had shown her where to find them, and told her how many he was to have for a halfpenny.

"What in the world! Why, there is the lady actually selling shoe-nails!" Hannebine called out in great astonishment; and Hermann, who just then looked up, almost called out too. Eugénie

glanced across at them with a smile, and a hearty laugh concluded this little scene of confusion.

The shop was closed, and Hannebine, whose heart was at once won over to the young wife by this matter of the shoe-nails, had dispersed the customers, paid and treated the coachman, sent off the little carriage, and had then gone off to the small shop-parlour to make some tea which she mixed with cinnamon, though a mere common tea seemed far too light a repast for the occasion of such a welcome.

Hermann and Eugenie sat together on the sofa, and the wife leaned her head on her husband's shoulder.

"Oh, how I thank God that you are come!" he said, again and again. "But," he asked, all of a sudden, as an anxious feeling came over him, "are you come only as a guest, or will you really stay with me?"

Eugenie looked at him tenderly; the joyfulness of the first excitement was over—she felt fatigued; and a slight trepidation came over her as she remembered that she was now irrevocably fixed at Dietmannsweiler.

"Oh yes, certainly, I am going to remain with you," she said, placing her hand in his. "I will be your faithful wife; I will do my duty, and by God's help I will try and amend all that has been wrong."

Her duty! That little word jarred slightly on Hermann's ear, and brought a momentary pang

to his heart. So it was duty only that turned her back to him, not her own inclination. He was willing to take her as sent from God, to receive the unexpected boon from His hand, without speculating too closely about the motive.

"The upstairs rooms are all to-rights now. Hannebine, coming in.

As Hermann rose to go, his eye fell on a book lying in a chest, and he lifted it out.

"It is the Bible," he said to Eugenie, with embarrassment. "In old times my cousin used to read it at the evening prayers; shall we have a remembrance of him, begin our first evening prayer here by reading a chapter?"

Eugenie assented, and Hermann turned over the pages of the volume, which was marked with many pencilled notes, and which opened to him at the 128th Psalm.

Hermann read aloud at first in a somewhat slow and constrained manner, but afterwards, in a more serious, yet in a more natural voice, the words of the Psalmist:—

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, who walketh in His ways.

"For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the fountain of thine house; thy children like olive-plants about thy table.

"Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed who feareth the Lord.

"The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion ; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

"Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel."

Hermann closed the book ; they folded their hands together in silent prayer ; and thus ended the day.

And now again long years have passed over the household. Eugenie, poor Eugenie ! after all her sweet maiden dreams—after her romantic wood-adventure—now sits in a shop at Dietmannsweiler. The old house of the venerable cousin has been indeed freshly and pleasantly arranged, and the once dim shop-windows are replaced by others which are clean as a mirror, while the various articles behind them are arranged in most orderly manner. The stone steps leading to the shop are decorated on each side with blooming oleanders and laurels, and the shop itself is well ventilated, and set nicely in order ; but we cannot conceal it (much as has been done to the old fellow)—we cannot deny that cheese, snuff, vinegar, and oil are still sold in him ; and that the stock-fish and herrings which he fosters have by no means learned the secret of smelling fragrantly.

But these odours are not permitted to work their way into the shop-parlour, for hyacinths, roses, nemophilas, heliotropes, and stocks are blooming there—not all at once indeed, but each in its season—in such abundance, and with such sweet fragrance.

that one might quite forget there was such a thing as cheese in the world. The latticed walls and trellis-work are still standing as in the time of their old master around the desks, but they are now wreathed about most tastefully with green ivy ; and the pretty new desk which Eugenie has purchased for her husband's use has in front of it a well-made office-stool, embroidered with birds and flowers ; while, instead of an office-cap, such as was worn by the venerable cousin, Hermann wears an embroidered one, which looks almost too jaunty for a master of a business and a father of a family.

Herr Eidenbenz makes no poetical claims on flowers and ivy wreaths, yet even he allows himself to derive some pleasure from a nicer seat and desk. In the old place, at the unscreened table in the middle, where the mute Christian used to sit, there is now sitting a pleasant black-eyed lad, George, the son of the widow upstairs ; and though he certainly now and then wants a setting to-rights, yet the joyous spirit of boyhood is never quite smothered in him by the atmosphere of the shop. Herr Walter takes great pains to teach him, and the apprentice holds in his inmost heart a firm persuasion that his master is the first of mortal men, and could, if he chose, be a minister of state. As to the lady-wife, the fair, calm creature who speaks to him so kindly, and manages the house so gracefully and gaily, he takes her to be really almost more than mortal, the perfection of womanly beauty and dignity, though on very busy days she

does not disdain to enter the shop, which the customers always regard as a special honour paid to them. To cheese alone she had never stooped, and stock-fish and herrings belong altogether to the masculine department.

Eugenie's proper place in the household was indeed in the upper story, where she reigned alone; but she was wont to place her pretty little work-table in the pleasant window-seat of the shop-parlour, perhaps—though she did not exactly confess it—perhaps that she might be near her husband, perhaps also in order to give him a helping hand in case of need. One thing at least is quite clear to George, that the young ones of the household, the restless creatures who now and then swarm round the counter begging for almonds and raisins, or stretch forth their little roguish faces from the aperture above him, that they at least certainly belong to the race of mortals. He is their best friend and playfellow, and is never weary of making little boats, boxes, and paper caps for their delight; and he draws pictures for them of fine ships, in one of which he quite intends some day sailing forth into the wide world.

Everything in the rooms upstairs is now almost too elegant to be suitable for Dietmannsweiler; all is handsomer indeed than the arrangements in the house of the high bailiff, and people really now “can no longer say”—to recall mamma's expression *on a former occasion*; but Eugenie is so amiable and kindly a hostess that her neighbours willingly

forgive her for outrivalling them in splendour, and even overlook the fact that she came from the capital. She has learned, too, by slow degrees, that the towns-folk of a retired country place are by no means an altogether peculiar race of beings, who have grown up in unvarying succession from the race of the country-townspeople whom Kotzebue has described, but that they are people of different degrees of cultivation, with living human hearts, moved by life's joys and sorrows, and actually such beings as it is quite possible to become much attached to, and from whom affection may be won by friendly help and loving sympathy.

Fraulein Hannebine had retired from the world in peace and honour. Cousin Bürner had bequeathed to her the garden in front of the gate, with its ancient stone summer-house; but as Walter wished to have it on account of the old memories connected with it, she had resigned it to him, and with the money derived from this purchase had bought herself a little house close by the garden, where she lived in perfect content. She was on excellent terms with Hermann's young family, and often assured Hermann that he was certainly born with a Fortunatus's cap on his head to possess such a wife as he did. She was kept supplied with sugar and coffee gratis from the shop; and once a year, in the winter season, she invited the whole family to a wonderful coffee-drinking, when the coffee was prepared even more

delicately than Frau Walter herself could have done it, though Hannebine confessed to having cooked it in the good old way, and renounced all faith in the new machines for boiling coffee. The children enjoyed the merry-making, and looked forward to the supply of delicate butter-cakes which she would give them on the occasion, and which lasted for many weeks after.

And the world! that enigmatical, many-headed, impalpable power which the mamma, and even Eugenie had held in such respect, and which they secretly dreaded when they thought of the terrible possibility that Eugenie's life might be passed behind a counter! What did the world say to all this settling down, which seemed as the close of a round game?

Oh! the world is not so dull as it seems, it acquiesces in all accomplished facts. Little reliance as is to be placed on the world's judgments, yet I never observed that it condemns those who pursue an honest course with firmness and straightforwardness. The greater number of Eugenie's acquaintances had forgotten her altogether, before they ever even knew whether she remained with her parents or had gone back to her husband; some of the number thought her act a very sensible one, the most natural, and indeed the most respectable thing she could do, especially when they learned how honourably her husband had fulfilled *all his obligations*. Her aunt the colonel's wife, *and the aunt at the Presidency*, too, were quite

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reconciled to the step, and used to send their sons and daughters over every year to the grape cure or currant cure at Dietmannsweiler, and her own parents passed their pleasantest and dearest season of recreation with Hermann and Eugenie. Eugenie, also, had long since adapted herself with such perfect ease to the state of things in which she had found peace, that her courage did not fail her even when she received Herr Von Plümer, who one day came a long way round from a hunting party to buy cigars and matches at the shop in Dietmannsweiler, on purpose to see the proud Eugenie behind a counter. It turned out so far according to his wish, that he happened to come on a market-day, when Eugenie's help was needed; but she appeared to so much advantage in the shop that he was compelled to confess she seemed to have the manner and air of a queen, while at the same time a somewhat mischievous laugh flashed from her brown eyes when she gave him what he wanted. Indeed, his own self-possession, with which he had intended to patronize the poor woman in her humiliation, even this quite forsook him at the sight of her, and he departed without making an effective recognition scene.

Recreation in each other's society, occasional holiday, and parties of pleasure, were but scantily allotted to the pair, but then, for this very reason, they were so much the more gladly and gaily enjoyed. If they had not many festive occasions, yet they had many delightful hours at home, when

the children were asleep, and George was quiet, and the shop closed, and Herr Eidenbenz gone to make his jokes at the Eagle. Sometimes a few friends would drop in for an evening visit, and their silent friends, books, were always there standing all in a row, ready for them. There were the poets, from whom were wafted to them both a fresh breath of youth and beauty; there were books for thoughtful study or lighter recreation, and some fitted for serious, earnest contemplation; and there, too, were the pages containing the words of eternal truth, which had brought so much light and peace to their hearts.

But there is one especial day of rejoicing in the home of Herr Walter, a sunny day, a day which comes once every year, and which is always kept as a festival. It is the anniversary of Eugenie's coming back to Dietmannsweiler; it happens too, accidentally, to be the anniversary of their marriage. On this day Herr Eidenbenz and George manage the business together, aided by Frau Hannebine, who always treats them both to an extra cup of coffee. The family, when this day comes, pass it entirely in the garden, to the inexpressible delight of the children. Eugenie and Hermann sit under a verandah which has lately been built around the old stone house, and the children play on the turf beneath the blossoming shrubs of the garden, for the kitchen garden has long since *retired into the background*. All around them *breathes peace and happiness*.

"Where in all the world," said Hermann, on one of these sunny days, as he glanced lovingly into the still beautiful brown eyes of his wife, "where could we find a sweeter spot than this garden in Dietmannsweiler, in front of the old stone house of our departed cousin?"

"There is not a spot on earth that could be more delightful to me," said Eugenie, with perfect sincerity; "but you, dearest—do you not desire a better neighbourhood, a more important sphere of action? Are you really quite contented here?"

"Do not despise me, dear," said Hermann, smiling, "if I confess that I am. I do indeed believe that those men are most happily circumstanced whose calling seemed appointed them from their very infancy, and might in fact be regarded as their birthright; so that they know from the very first what it is to be, and comprehending it more and more fully as they go on in life, they make a way for themselves, even though it be amid rocks and shoals. I know few, very few, who are made happy through their business or profession. Most men regard their daily occupation, even where it bears the proudest name, but as a handicraft, followed for the sake of daily bread, or for the sake of wealth or fame. To most the daily business is a daily task and toil; and well is it for that man who accepts it as such from God's hands, and, looking up to Him, fulfils it all the more surely and faithfully because he has such a resting-place  all his thoughts and care."

Hermann drew his wife towards him, and they sat looking serenely at the group of playful children. "That was our true wedding-day, Eugenie," he said, "when you came back to me here."

Eugenie shook her head. "I was very far from thinking and feeling rightly at that time," she said. "Oh, there were many, many sad hours of discouragement and weariness, and it seemed to me that the more earnestly I strove to do what was right, the more I felt despondency creeping over me. Just as I felt that I was on the point of sinking I gained the rock on which our home is now founded."

"That, too, was my own experience," said Hermann, in a low voice.

They spoke no more, but their thoughts wandered far away beyond the fragrant flowers and the blooming children, and rested on a little lowly green grave, from which had arisen the first blossom that now bore them such precious fruits.

THE END.

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